

SUMMER DIARY

Gerald Haigh abandons his deckchair to seek out Bournemouth's educational entrepreneurs.

Off-beat style breaks bounds

David Hellewell, enthusiastic composer, and inveterate talker is the founder of what, for want of a better name, he continues to call "Mister D Music".

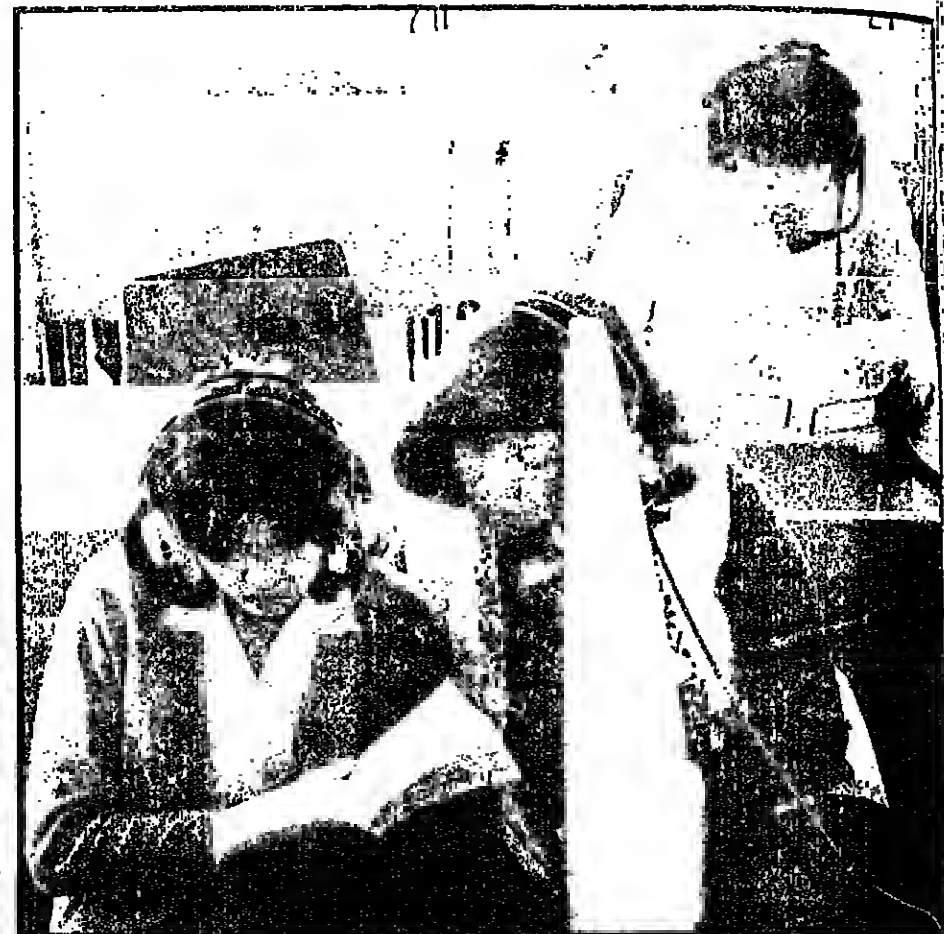
Hellewell caused a couple of ripples, reported in *The TES* back in January, when he made some outspoken criticisms of conventional music teaching. "Traditional music teaching puts children off," he said then. What Hellewell does, in essence, is write graded keyboard music which combines classical, rock, pop and jazz styles. He publishes this music and also teaches it to young players in his "Mister D Music Academy".

Although he believes firmly in the piano as the essential basis of all keyboard work, he makes much use of electronic instruments, and I watched a happy ensemble workshop for young players using conventional instruments and also electronic keyboards. Without doubt young players enjoy "Mister D Music" for, as more and more teachers are belatedly realizing, the barriers between styles are largely artificial, largely erected by adults, and have as much to do with social convention as they do with musical judgment.

An important key to Hellewell's success lies in his own formidable musicianship, which alone is enough to belie his apparent disdain for the classics. In fact he aims to teach a love for all kinds of music.



Bournemouth: a Mecca for EFL students from all over the world



When B & B means books and board

I always used to feel that Bournemouth should have in its parks instead of Crazy Golf, a more appropriate game called Sensible Golf where heads on holiday could hit balls along predictable and unsurprising paths while exchanging reserved pleasantries with attendants in pinstripe suits.

Now, however, the Government itself has enlivened the summer with its own moniacal pronouncement about corporal punishment, and heads are thereby relieved for all time of the requirement to be sensible. This autumn, therefore, I propose to carry out my long-standing threat to take assembly with my trousers rolled up to the knees in order to see if anyone notices.

Mind you, pupil perception of what constitutes absurdity can be refreshingly acute. On the last day of term I donned an academic gown to be photographed with a colleague who had just been to his degree ceremony, only to find myself being followed about by gleefully pointing children. Did it happen to Dr Arnold? I asked myself.

I have watched Bournemouth, over a period of almost 30 years, gradually being taken over by the under-20s. The grass in the gardens which used to be only for looking at is now covered with gaggles of happy youngsters with stereophonic blasters. An important ingredient in this change has been the growth of the English language school industry along the South Coast. The Bournemouth area alone draws tens of thousands of students from all over the world each year.

The story of the language schools is that of all private enterprise - lean years and fat years, periodic raids by avaricious cowboys, the growth of professional bodies and a continuing

theme of various kinds of tentative government intervention. The one I visited, the Hinton School of English, in the centre of Bournemouth, has about 400 students at any one time in the summer, the numbers falling in the winter to about a quarter of this.

The first thing that struck me about it was that although a school, it is very firmly a business concern with, for example, a reception area and a well-staffed office which presents an efficient and tidy face to the customer. Perhaps I should not have been surprised, therefore, to discover that the director of the school, Rodney Taylor, is not a teacher but a businessman - a quantity surveyor, in fact, by profession. "We have to go out and sell our product," he says, and he clearly believes in the age-old commercial principle of developing a quality product and then working hard to sell it.

There are two professional bodies in this field - the Federation of English Language Course Organizations, which looks after summer-only courses, and the Association of Recognized English Language Schools which is made up of year-round schools, and Taylor's school belongs to both.

He advertises all over the world and a multi-lingual member of staff visits market countries each year. Teaching is by a director of studies and half a dozen permanent staff, augmented in the busy season by up to 25 teachers and lecturers working in their vacation.

In many a secondary school, I guess, the head of modern languages dreams of waving it all goodbye and moving to the sunny south to open a language school. From what I have seen, I would say forget it - unless you are equipped with a wide range of commercial and business skills, and the nerve and personality to go with them, plus a lot of "hip-front" innuendo.

It is necessary, for example, to find and negotiate fair commissions with agents who will thrust my business in other countries. Then there is the need to cope with ever-changing local

No 114 CROSSWORD by Rupert

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down.

Across

1 Sedious converse (8)  
5 Word associated with poker - but it's not flush (4)  
9 What goes native (5)  
10 Usable's favorite form of transit (7)  
11 Pass our plan for interior decoration (16)  
13 Property that goes with rank (6)

Down

2 Do some evening work on board, perhaps (12)  
3 Give a spot (4,2,3,3)  
4 Temper resulting from upset reason (6)  
6 A day-week-longers to the church (5)  
7 Entertainer, possibly Sudanese (8)  
8 Round top? (8,4)  
12 Field division that takes years to train (8)  
15 Dazed American general in retreat and exile (7)  
16 The Spanish man comes first in chess (6)  
17 Urge a new debate (3)  
19 Intact on being disesteemed (14)

troupe of little girls in hussar outfits blowing in approximate unison those comb and paper devices that we used to call bazookas. There is apparently a lot of this about in certain areas of the country.

Now I am prepared to concede that this activity may be marginally more constructive than spitting sawdust; however, the very least the organizers could do is to stop calling their groups jazz bands. If they do not I propose to give all the children in my road a bluebird and a coal hammer each and call them the Midland Youth Percussion Ensemble.

THE TIMES Educational Supplement

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Young people who want to take up a flying career can now test their aptitude with a two-week course of the College of Air Training at Hatfield, near Southampton. The course, which is open to all aged 17 or over, costs £1,250. Pictured above: Instructor Pat Patrick puts Douglas Ferguson through his paces.

Benefit cuts seen as bid to make YTS compulsory

by Biddy Passmore

Fears are growing among lecturers and careers officers that the Government is determined to force young people on to the Youth Training Scheme.

This follows reports that ministers are considering cuts in young people's benefits, along with moves to penalize youngsters who refuse training places.

If proposals drawn up in the Department of Health and Social Security are implemented, the supplementary benefit of £15.80 now paid to unemployed 16 and 17-year-olds would be cut back nearer to the £13.15 unemployed parents get for children between 11 and 15.

That would make more tempting the £25 allowance paid under the Youth Training Scheme, which gets under way in the next couple of weeks. Ministers are said to be concerned that many young people may not consider it worth their while to join the scheme and may choose to stay at home instead.

The DHSS plans, which would also cut benefits to 18-year-olds by up to £7 or £8 a week, have not yet been approved by ministers. But, as they could offer a short-term saving of up to £200 a year, they may be brought into play during the discussions between spending departments and the Treasury which start next month.

But, even if those plans are not adopted, there will already be strong financial pressure on young people to join the scheme. A circular has gone out from the Department of Employment, reminding careers officers that they must notify the local benefit office if a teenager refuses a YTS place.

THIS WEEK

SCHOOL TO WORK OVERSEAS NEWS LETTERS TALKBACK ENDPAGE SUMMER DIARY AND CROSSWORD CLASSIFIED

16-plus rejection

Sir Keith Joseph has rejected an attempt to give the proposed 16-plus exam in English an explicit multi-cultural dimension

Rich diet

The most expensive private school in the country opens next month in Wiltshire offering Lebanese food and a course of academic cramming

Legal pointer

A Scottish High Court ruling could point the way to legislation on glue sniffing

Sideways glance

The humble crab (right) provides the answers for school biologists

Platform

Tim Devlin says the independent schools need to justify their charitable status by local cooperation

Special schools to pick up £2.5m micro windfall

by Diane Spencer

Handicapped children are to benefit from a £2.5m investment in information technology in special schools. It was announced at the British Association for the Advancement of Science annual meeting in Brighton this week.

This is the first time the Department of Industry has given money to special schools under its "Miles in school" scheme.

Mr Kenneth Baker, Minister for Technology, said resource centres would be established in special schools throughout the country. In addition, £2.5m would be spent on IT equipment, and another 175 "turtles" (an electronic toy linked to a microcomputer) would also be provided.

"For many disabled children, information technology means the ability to communicate with the outside world and to have some control of their own environment for the very first time," he told the meeting.

The extra funding was welcomed by Mr John Garrett, president of the National Council for Special Education. But he warned that teachers would need in-service training in its use.

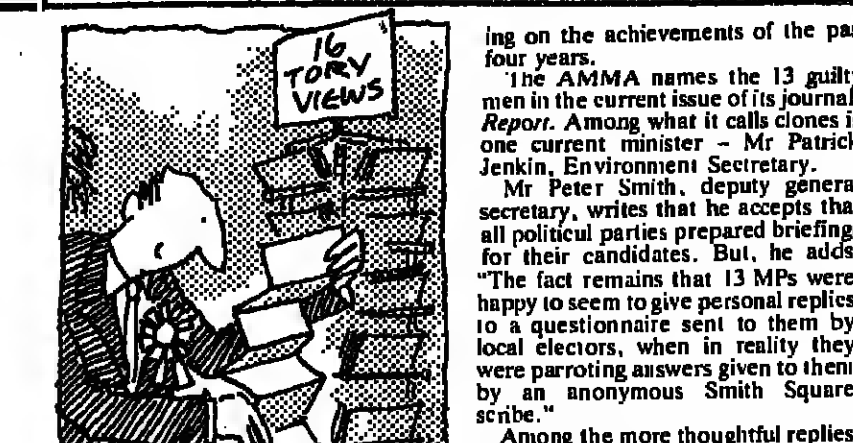
Mr Roy Hattersley, MP, one of the leading contenders for the leadership of the Labour Party, told the meeting that comprehensive education was not enough to ensure equal opportunity in education. *Bob Doe writes.*

He called for massive "social investment" in disadvantaged areas such as the inner cities, with more teachers, books and resources for schools.

Teachers working in deprived areas should be paid more to compensate for the extra effort required. "It is absurd to pay more to the teacher who teaches Latin to small groups of highly motivated adults than to teachers who wrestle with 40 infants, a majority of whom cannot read English."

He accused the "prosperous and powerful class" of wilfully neglecting the less well off. "I remain convinced of the view that if Permanent Secretaries sent their children to state schools and their wives to state hospitals there would not have been the savage public expenditure cuts which we have endured in recent years."

On the abolition of public schools and private health care, "the entrenched institutions which permanently separate the rich and the poor from the rest of society," he said: "Freedom cannot encompass opportunity to do others harm."



ing on the achievements of the past four years.

The AMMA names the 13 guilty men in the current issue of its journal, *Report*. Among what it calls clones is one current minister - Mr Patrick Jenkin, Environment Secretary.

Mr Peter Smith, deputy general secretary, writes that he accepts that all political parties prepared briefings for their candidates. But, he adds: "The fact remains that 13 MPs were happy to seem to give personal replies to a questionnaire sent to them by local electors, when in reality they were parroting answers given to them by an anonymous Smith Square scribe."

Among the more thoughtful replies were those of the former Chancellor Sir Geoffrey Howe, now Foreign Secretary, who believed that one reason for teachers' low morale was the constant assertions of this by teacher unions. He rejected the notion that the relationship between central and local government was in any way unbalanced. Local authority would continue to be consulted over educational initiatives.

Tim Brinon, returned for Gravesham, and former member of the Commons Select Committee for Education, said central government should fund schools directly, "so that local democracy could become even more local."

Turn of the shrew

The British Mammal Society and all its trappings

Sporting chance

Milfield School, with facilities for 40 different sports, is open to everyone in the summer

Arts/Books

Timothy O'Keefe on Irish literature; Aina Taylor on Leopardi; D A N Jones on

Regency editing: Jonathan Ree on the history of education; Robin Buss on television; Finlay Macdonald on radio; Michael Clarke on sculpture; Brian Morion on Nikolaus Pevsner

Resources/Media

Susan Thomas visits a summer camp for gifted children; Jane Last on the assessment of children's reactions to television. Reviews of video programmes on how to cope with "the system" and development education

John Co 116





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In this shortened version of his presidential address to the Education Section of the British Association meeting in Brighton this week, Stuart Maclure starts from the premise that the most important social change of the past seven years has been the growth of unemployment, and in particular the collapse of ordinary jobs for 16-year-old school-leavers.

The paper goes on to discuss the impact of this basic change in the economy on those now emerging from the schools. They face an extended transition from school to work, via the Youth Training Scheme, and this will have implications, he argues, for youth culture, for marriage and family life and for schools and their curricula: "for many there will be periods of employment interspersed with unemployment, with a return to further education, perhaps with opportunities for community work, with a mixture of part-time and temporary jobs, legal and illegal, with periods of elation and hope, poverty and despair".

In considering education's response to this changed employment scene, there seems little profit in discussing in polarized terms the question of whether some pupils should be "educated for unemployment" while others are prepared for work. This seems to suggest a kind of selection or predestination of a wholly unrealistic (as well as undesirable) kind. For many there will be periods of work and periods of unemployment. The need will be to educate people to be resilient and versatile enough to cope with the process of periodical job-changing including the likelihood that there will be time without paid work between jobs.

The problem is to translate a bland statement like this into realistic curricular terms. It is easy to talk about the need to learn how to learn, rather than be taught to assimilate facts for instant regurgitation. So much curriculum development seems to take the form of setting out a list of highly desirable (but quite possibly unattainable) aims and then using elementary *a priori* reasoning, choosing a set of educational activities which may be thought in an optimistic moment to point in the same direction. There is a singular lack of empirical evidence about exactly what educational experiences conduce to the survival skills of modern society.

What is true, of course, is that any number of different curricula can be taught by the right people and in the right way to build up confidence and curiosity – that these qualities can be fostered in one school, undermined in another, within, essentially, the same public curriculum because the hidden mutual influences of teachers, parents and pupils are different.

There is certainly a paradox in the present upsurge of pressure on schools to introduce courses based on vocational interests at exactly the time when the links between school and work are becoming more tenuous, with a Youth Training year interposed between the end of school and the beginning of "ordinary" employment.

This raises, of course, one of the recurring themes of education – the tension between educators who see their prime task in terms of the development of young people as people – intellectually, morally, aesthetically – and believe that if they, the teachers, do this conscientiously it will equip young people for life, including work; and the parents and the pupils themselves who interpret the signals of society as saying, first and foremost, give us the skills which will hold down a job.

The demand for relevance is one of the expressions of this tension. It surfaced in the context of the student unrest of the late 1960s as part of the students' ease against the academics whom they accused of being out of touch with the real needs of ordinary graduates. It is behind much of the present talk about vocational and technical courses in secondary and further education.

But even if you do elevate the aim of acquiring skills relevant to employment above all others it is not clear that this is best served by vocational courses, given the great uncertainty about the future of work.

The inference has to be that what is needed is not vocational education, but this elusive thing called education for capability. The more the Royal Society of Arts describes it, the harder it becomes to pin down because – again – it is

## Growing up in the Eighties

by Stuart Maclure



evidence that this or that course achieves it. What is not obvious is that the present academic course offers as good a basis for education for competence as it should; let alone the watered down academic course offered to those pupils who come within the old Newsom definition of those of average and below average ability.

It seems to me that the current excitement about technical and vocational education has to be seen, not as something aimed at transmitting specific skills, but as an acceptable basis for general education in the society of the 1980s which is deeply worried about employment and finds it easier to contemplate the pursuit of general education – including such "useless" aspects of general education as art and music – in a context which is publicly orientated towards employment in all its forms. The major task of curriculum reform is to restate the outline of the curriculum in forms which point towards competence and capability and self-reliance, using both the vocabulary and the processes of the world of work and the basic tools of education and continuing learning.

I have argued elsewhere that the need to rationalize the mixture of education and YTS which will be on offer for the 16-18 year age group will become increasingly pressing, but how long it will take will depend on how fast the logic of events demonstrates the absurdity of maintaining an examination system and a curriculum geared to an assumed need for large numbers of 16-year-old school-leavers.

The present system of assessment at 16 and 18 is well designed to thin out the number of potential entrants to higher education and ration expectations along with opportunities from one year to the next. But in reality it would make much more sense to keep more students within the education system longer and broaden the range of experiences within the educational system to include many of those now being set up within the YTS. I can well see the structural difficulties in bringing the schools and further education provision for the 16 to 18s and the YTS provision closer together, and the more entrenched and institutionalized the differences become the harder to change. But sooner or later – and preferably sooner – something will have to be done.

A lot will depend on the future of the 16-plus examination. It is already possible to hear enlightened industrial trainers commenting on the high quality of some of their YOP recruits, and noting that some of those with no examination results are more capable and quick to

learn. This is reported as if it were news; of course, it is nothing of the kind. So long as there was full employment it was one of the saving graces of the system that many people have always managed to succeed at work where they have failed at school. Now employers will have youngsters on "sale or return" for 12 months during which time they will assess their capacities and their suitability, not in some Platonic sense as people or as intellectuals, but as potential employees for specific jobs, and they will pay much less attention to previous exam results than to their own informed judgments.

When this happens – in theory at least – the significance of the 16-plus for large numbers of pupils should decline and if this coincided with the arrival of criterion-referenced testing and profiles, it might just conceivably open up the way for radical reform in which an external exam at 16 became a thing of the past.

It is certainly true that the logic of Sir Keith Joseph's anguish on behalf of the "bottom 40 per cent", whose poor performance the examination system now certifies, points to finding ways of reducing the importance of external exams, not extending them to ever-increasing numbers and it will be a crass failure of imagination if those responsible for the examination system fail to recognize that the YTS eliminates some of the earlier requirements for a school-leaving examination.

Of course, there is another way in which things could go – more selective, more differentiated, more elitist: with the comprehensive school split three ways between an academic line heading for higher education, a technical and vocational line taking another 30 per cent who would head for technician training, and a third "general" or "modern" or "senior elementary" line for whom the Youth Training Scheme would be more or less tailor-made.

Such a reincarnated tripartitism would not require the restoration of the 11-plus; it could be comprehended within the comprehensive school. It is a basic requirement of the MSC's Technical and Vocational Education Initiative that it should be open to pupils of all levels of ability and there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of Mr David Young, the chairman of the Manpower Services Commission, nor yet of the members of his TVEI steering board. But it will be one thing to make the offering, another actually to secure an intake in which all levels of ability (as the schools measure ability) are represented.

Time will tell how successful TVEI is in achieving its object of permeating the whole

curriculum, not just siphoning off a technological stream. There is already some reason to believe that some schemes will be much more successful than others in this respect. And, when the attempt is made to apply the concept which underlies the generously financed TVEI projects more widely across the system (with the generous external finance) it will be difficult to present these courses in the glamorous way which now plays on the MSC venture. (It will be a typical piece of bad luck for the DES if a department were to find itself wrestling once back from the MSC in circumstances which are less guarantee the venture will lose its priceless Hawthorne effect.)

It could be that a more sharply differentiated secondary curriculum – implying that no weight is to be put on meeting a diversity of needs than guaranteeing a shared experience – will accord more closely to the social attitudes of the 1980s than the more egalitarian curriculum which inspired the move to comprehensive education in the 1960s.

What will be interesting to watch, not only relation to the TVEI, but also in relation to examination reform generally, and to curriculum development and planning, is the extent which 14 is allowed to become (or remain) a crucial decision point in secondary education: how the need to produce "relevant" and "challenging" courses for the pupils who will need particularly well in any 16-plus exams is fed into plans for a core curriculum; and how much of the apple the core should be allowed to displace.

The paper concludes by returning to the premise, for young people reaching maturity without reliable expectation of employment.

It is of prime importance that the distribution of jobs and incomes should accord with the human needs of young men and women entering adulthood in these times of social and economic stress. It is not enough to rely upon "the invisible hand" of laissez-faire economics and the minimal provision of welfare benefits to take care of the many thousands who stand to suffer, especially in areas once totally dependent on heavy industry. Too much is at stake.

It will clearly be necessary to provide more subsidized alternatives to unemployment. The makes suggestions for new forms of community work programmes attractive as ways of distributing some of the money appropriated for supplementary benefits on forms of community activity. Ideally, there should be ways of paying some of the 18 to 25-year-olds a social wage for community work instead of an unearned dole. Difficulties abound, but they exist to be overcome by anyone who recognizes the necessity of providing self-respect for those who emerge from YTS and still have no jobs to go to and those who still find themselves in their twenties in the ranks of the long-term unemployed.

This is only one aspect of a second and no larger problem – certainly not one confined to young people: how to mitigate the obvious injustices in a community where the majority are in full-time work and getting richer and richer as the economy struggles for recovery, while a minority, which includes many of the young and most vulnerable, get poorer and poorer. There are some real psychological hurdles to overcome. The psychology needed to reconstruct the economy and create new markets and new employment is aggressive and entrepreneurial. The psychology needed to adjust to the social consequences of the collapse of an economic system and the creation of another, is compassionate and understanding.

The aggressive pursuit of new opportunities and new wealth creation goes at present in punitive attitudes towards the unemployed and the philosophy of public finance which assumes that public services and social benefits must be curbed lest they bespeak resources needed to fuel the private consumption on which individual incentives thrive.

But if high unemployment levels are to be accepted – however regretfully – as part of the traumatic changes overtaking the British economy, a system of public benefits, which respects the humanity and human dignity of recipients, is an elementary requirement of a tolerable society. It remains to be seen if the compassion and aggressive, tough-minded pursuit of adaptation and enterprise can go together. It is not necessarily obvious that they can. Unfortunately neither will suffice by themselves.

Nick Wood reports on differing Government reactions to two exam board proposals on the 16-plus

## No ... to multi-ethnic section in English

The Government has dismissed the exam boards' attempt to give the proposed new 16-plus exam in English an explicitly multicultural dimension. Draft proposals governing the conduct of exams in the subject, approved by the Joint Council for 16-plus National Criteria, and submitted to ministers at the beginning of the year, contained a separate section on "English in a multicultural society".

But last week, Sir Keith Joseph, the

Education Secretary, in a letter to Sir Wilfred Cockcroft, chairman of the Secondary Examinations Council, said that there was no need for the guidelines for English to make specific reference to the position of the ethnic minorities.

The letter said the section should be deleted with the points it was making being incorporated elsewhere in the guidelines or included in the general criteria which will lay down the

framework for all exams at 16-plus. In addition the letter from Sir Keith and Mr Nicholas Edwards, the Welsh Secretary, said: "The Secretaries of State recognize the importance of the issues raised in section C (English in a multicultural society) of the draft criteria statement but question whether this is the most appropriate way of alerting examining groups to the needs of candidates from ethnic minorities."

The controversial section contains four main points. It reminds examining groups they will need to:

- Consider offering exams in English as a second language to candidates who are not native English speakers;
- Bear in mind the linguistic and cultural diversity of candidates when drawing up syllabuses and framing exams; It also says:
- Ability in the use of non-standard English. It also says: particularly in

oral tests, should count towards final marks; and

- Literature syllabuses should not be restricted to the works of English-speaking writers.

Sir Keith and Mr Edwards replied that the first two points should be covered by the general criteria. The third should apply to all candidates, not just those from ethnic minorities, and could be included by a reworking of the overall aims of the subject. They thought the fourth was redundant because it reiterated an earlier statement about the content of literature courses.

Elsewhere, the Secretaries of State stress the importance of candidates demonstrating their mastery of standard English in both written and spoken forms.

They accept the case for oral assessment but look to the Secondary Examinations Council to resolve doubts about whether valid and reliable assessments of candidates in this area can be carried out.

Provided the SEC agrees, they are prepared to allow coursework to count towards a candidate's final mark. They also want the council to give "firm guidance" on whether every candidate should take the same question paper or whether there should be a range of papers tailored to candidates' abilities.

Turning to the proposals for English literature, the Secretaries of State say that they are again prepared to accept coursework for assessment purposes, provided the SEC agrees. But they believe literature exams will require differentiated question papers to reflect the varying degrees of difficulty of the texts chosen for study.

## Yes ... to draft guidelines on maths

Draft guidelines for maths exams at 16-plus have been welcomed by ministers.

Sir Keith Joseph, the Education Secretary, and Mr Nicholas Edwards, the Welsh Secretary, are evidently pleased that the exam boards have drawn heavily on the findings of the Committee of Inquiry into the Teaching of Mathematics in Schools, which was chaired by Sir Wilfred Cockcroft, now chairman of the Secondary Examinations Council.

Nevertheless, they would like the final criteria for mathematics to go further down the road mapped out in Sir Wilfred's report.

In their letter to him last week, inviting the SEC to comment on the criteria submitted by the boards, the Secretaries of State suggest that the aims of the subject be broadened to include carrying out extended pieces of work, mathematical investigations and problem solving. Courses should also teach the use of mathematics as the language of science.

But Ministers also hope more Cockcroft recommendations will be taken up

The SEC is asked to advise on whether these additional aims, together with performance in oral work, should be made specific targets of assessment.

Ministers have their doubts about the two lists of topics that the exam boards, drawing on the Cockcroft foundation list, have used to outline the subject's content.

They fear that list one – the basic list – might be too lengthy for some of the least able pupils to approach with confidence. They also question whether the typical grade three candidate (equivalent to an O level pass) will be



Sir Wilfred Cockcroft

able to cope with a syllabus made up of all the items in lists one and two.

On the other hand, they want the board to give clearer guidance on the syllabuses for the most able pupils to ensure they are fully stretched.

Ministers show surprising enthusiasm for school-based assessment of mathematics, suggesting such an



Sir Keith Joseph

approach could be particularly valuable in marking oral and practical work in the subject. They acknowledge it could put up costs.

They also question whether timed, written papers should be the only compulsory element in assessment schemes and account for at least half of the marks.



Christopher Price

## Poly post for Price

Mr Christopher Price, who was Labour MP for Lewisham West and chairman of the Commons Select Committee on Education until he was defeated at the June election, has taken up a temporary post at the Polytechnic of the South Bank in London.

He has a six-month appointment to oversee policy on biotechnology and use his journalistic talents to advise the polytechnic on public relations. As biotechnology coordinator, Mr Price will be in the happy position of supervising the polytechnic's contribution to an initiative recommended by his old committee.

## Pay deadlock

A 13.5 per cent claim by chief education officers has gone to arbitration as a result of the breakdown of conciliation efforts last week. The local authorities have offered a rise of about 4.9 per cent to cover a pay period starting on July 1.

Senior education officers have been worried that their pay deals have been less generous than that of teachers, and that headteachers of larger schools and college principals can earn more than chief education officers.

## Father accuses I.e.a. of bias against Catholics

by Biddy Passmore

The father of a Roman Catholic boy who has been refused admission to a county school has accused Coventry education authority of religious discrimination.

Mr Tony Ryan, who has appealed to the Ombudsman, is a lapsed Catholic and does not want his son, Justin, to be educated at a Roman Catholic secondary school.

He says his son was automatically allocated a place at Bishop Ullathorne, a mixed RC comprehensive school four miles from his home, because he had attended St John Vianney RC primary school.

When Mr Ryan expressed a preference for Woodlands, a large and academic county boys' comprehensive which is five minutes' walk away, his application was turned down because the school was full. And when the case went to an appeals committee in June, it was rejected.

The council has since offered Justin a place at other county schools in the city but Mr Ryan refuses to consider them. "I'm not interested in alternative schools," he said last week. "I'm not going to Woodlands, he's not going anywhere."

A spokesman for Coventry council explained this week that a child could not be in two catchment areas – for a Catholic school and a county school –

at once. But Justin would have been fitted into Woodlands if there had been room, he said. It was a very popular school whose intake had been reduced this year from 300 to 240 to match a large drop in the number of local boys.

There had been 34 appeals for Woodlands school, of which 10 had been successful. Only one of these concerned a Roman Catholic child but that was an exceptional case involving a foster mother with handicapped children.

The Ryans' case highlights a problem caused by the separation of admissions for Catholic (voluntary) and county schools. Children attending Roman Catholic primary schools are always assumed to want a place at the nearest Catholic secondary. If their parents then express a preference for a county school, the council will usually do its best to fit the child in – but he may, as in this case, have to take place in the queue behind children from outside the catchment area with a brother or sister at the school or some other special reason for wanting it.

Coventry council will review its admissions policy this autumn and may then decide to warn parents of the implications of choosing a Roman Catholic primary school for their child.

## Asbestos threat shuts school

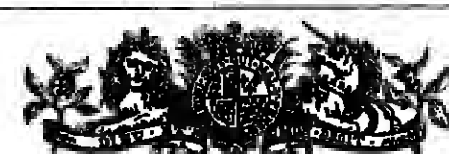
A primary school in Drumchapel, Scotland, has been closed after maintenance work exposed asbestos in the building.

The parents of the 350 children attending St Pius Primary School, were told that pupils would be sent to other schools while work on the school was being completed.

When the pupils returned to school last week the asbestos had been sealed

and the school passed as safe by health and safety officials, but work had not been completed.

Strathclyde Region were informed that the work would take six or seven weeks and were left with the options of closing the school for that period or trying to complete the work at weekends over a much longer period. It was decided that the simplest solution was to close the school.



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PLATFORM

Politically the independent schools are safe for at least another five years and probably more. I doubt whether any serious political party will ever again contain in its manifesto a crude commitment to abolish private schools. But the main thrust of political attack from the Left, and possibly from the Centre parties as well, will be on "public subsidies" or the diversion of ratepayers' or tax-payers' money for the purposes of private education. Economically the independent schools are reasonably sound. The late 1970s saw an expansion, particularly where day pupils were concerned, with the absorption of many former direct grant and some grammar schools. The early 1980s have not been easy but the effects of a deep recession have only slightly dented this expansion.

Schools may be tempted to sit tight in a rather complacent *status quo*. This might seem prudent. On the other hand the independent schools could use the party political lull and their position of comparative strength to re-gain the old nettle of a closer partnership with the maintained sector.

There is no official independent school policy and the views in this article are my own. But I believe the attempt should be made and would involve give-and-take on both sides. The basis for it should not be any central government scheme (as in the past with the Fleming and Newsom proposals) but informal links between schools in both sectors at local level to meet the considered needs of the community.

Such initiatives have flourished in the past because the private sector has given the impression that it has nothing to learn from the maintained. Both sectors have a great deal to learn from each other.

The main obstacles to a closer partnership are the inverted natures of schools themselves. Most are small communities (whether run privately or by local authorities) and are quite understandably absorbed in their own affairs. There is often a sad ignorance among teachers in both sectors of how the other half works and, more alarming, an indifference based on conceived lack of relevance to the problems which each sector faces. The introduction of comprehensive education throughout most of the maintained sector has led to an apparent lack of common philosophy and has destroyed bonds between selective schools which in the past bridged the two sectors.

Attempts by the independent sector



In this article based on his recent speech to the Professional Association of Teachers conference, Tim Devlin argues that the independent sector should justify charitable status – and protect it against future political attack – by collaborating with local education authorities to meet community needs.

## Independent but indebted

to put themselves across as being more than just the boys' public schools are hampered by these famous schools not only fascinating the media but also being the main targets for political attack.

The first step, therefore, to closer links must involve schools at local level getting together to reassess a common philosophy. Whatever their differences, schools need a common front to face the new and increasingly rapid changes which are likely to transform society over the next 10 years or so. They include: a radical reduction in the number of those on full-time paid employment; the consequent collapse of the work ethic as more than half the country's school leavers fail to find jobs; the increased amount of spare time leading to both boredom and a greater demand for leisure facilities; the need to train adults as well as children in the new technologies and the need, above all, for any society which claims to be "caring" to make special provision for those most likely to be vulnerable to these changes: ethnic minorities, the old, the handicapped, the illiterate and the children from single-parent homes.

Schools are well-placed to meet these challenges. There is no reason why the education of mature students, for example, should be catered for only in universities, polytechnics, tertiary and other colleges of further education. There is no reason why schools (and sixth-form colleges) should not view the education they provide as being equally relevant to those over the age of 18 as to those between the ages of 14 and 18.

If schools in a community were to come together to consider how best to meet the problems which they are undoubtedly going to face, the independent schools would find that they had a great deal to learn from the community college tradition of the maintained sector and from the work that is going on now in Sheffield and in Coventry to connect schools more closely to adult education and community needs.

I refer also to work done at Springfield School in Middlesbrough, on the Stanbury campus in Milton Keynes and by St Louise's School, in the Lower Falls area of Belfast, which opens its doors to the unemployed. Riverside primary school in Gateshead was one of a number of schools which cooperated with Help the Aged recently in a joint project which encouraged elderly people to work alongside young children in the classroom.

Independent schools should also open their facilities to the public at large or no cost during evenings and weekends (some already do but more could). Secondary schools with small sixth-form groups could accommodate a few adults at little or no cost in the classroom studying foreign languages, business studies and commercial courses, and gaining credits or examination passes. Adults could repay the school by giving lectures on any skills they have. The sixth form, by admitting adults, might be made more attractive to those who are often tempted to leave school at 16.

Preparatory schools could run courses for adults in computer skills alongside young children aged 11–13.

Boarding schools could run residential courses for pupils from day schools, for example, at the end of the summer term. Teachers could combine on residential in-service courses based at independent schools.

Such exchanges and initiatives should be done as far as possible within the local authority ambit. Let me presuppose a scenario in the late 1980s and early 1990s of increasing numbers of children and ever decreasing resources for education, and pressure from adults to use those school facilities which seem to be closed for nearly a third of the year. Local authorities might see the wisdom of using the resources available in both sectors more widely. If they did, an all-party agreement between the schools and the authority might be possible. This could include the local authority publicizing what was available at both maintained and independent schools in return for local authority advisers visiting, advising and inspecting independent schools, and some local representation on their governing bodies.

Local and central government should take up and pay for places for children at independent schools if the needs of those children cannot be met within local authority provision. The obvious area is boarding in those many areas where there is no local boarding provision. Boarding schools with good staff-pupil ratios and matrons are well placed to admit and integrate some of the non-severely handicapped children within the terms of the Warnock Committee.

It may well be argued that the power houses of the private system

Left: Marlborough College opens its doors to adults in the summer.

with their heady successes in technology, business studies, advanced mathematics and physics – not to mention classical and foreign languages – and their slight firm setting in the world of the independent sector, the small boarding secondary schools which cater for those with specific learning or other disabilities; the smaller day schools which nurture independence and a rounded education for all, and sometimes the most impressive of all, the best of British preparatory schools which draw out by contrast praise and encouragement good performance and success at an impressionable age from among the less talented.

Mrs Mary Warnock, writing in *THE SPECTATOR* (June 24), posed a challenge which should be taken up: "Should not some of the independent schools set themselves out to provide the best in non-academic education?"

Independent schools would be proud, but for parents. Some parents welcome sending their children to schools which open their doors to the community. Others may wonder how their money is being spent. But not all independent schools come from the community through rates (relief and some from the general public through tax relief).

Legally the schools' claim to this fiscal benefit is based on educational or charitable purpose. Morally, it is to come, with the pressure of the public purse becoming even greater than today, I am not sure. Some independent schools do a tremendous amount to meet boarding need, provide chairs for cathedrals, maintain ancient buildings and justify their charitable status in other ways. Others probably do not.

Within the next 10 years independent schools would be wise to devise some machinery by which each school individually can earn and justify its funds. It receives from the public purse. It would be a small price to pay for a place in the mainstream of education and for immunity from party political attack.

Tim Devlin is national director of ISIS (the Independent Schools Information Service) but the views he expresses in this article are personal.

NEWS

Philip Venning visits a remarkable school for the children of wealthy Arabs

## The exam factory where overtime is compulsory

What is almost certainly Britain's most expensive private school is soon to open in Wiltshire, offering a diet of Lebanese food and a degree of academic cramming unheard of even in the most notorious "exam factories."

In return for fees of at least £6,000 a year, children will be put through a strict regime of computer-marked tests and exams, centrally controlled curriculum and rigid teaching methods, all designed to ensure that even the most unpromising children find a place in higher education.

The International School of Choueifat opens on September 26 in Ashwick Hall, a former approved school between Bath and Chippenham. It is the fifth in a series of such schools, based on an original founded in Lebanon in 1886 by a Protestant clergyman, the Reverend Tamas Saad.

The British school, the first of the schools of Choueifat outside the Middle East, has been started expressly to prepare the children of wealthy Arab businessmen for places in American and on lesser extent British, universities and colleges.

All teaching will be in English, and though the principal will be an Arab, the academic side is being supervised by his deputy, Mr Rodney Priest.

formerly a chemistry master at George Ward School, Melksham. Of the 17 teachers so far appointed, 12 are British.

Ashwick Hall is a nineteenth century mansion in a large estate, and the school is spending millions on creating sports fields, laboratories, and other facilities suitable for a co-educational boarding school taking pupils from the age of six.

But the high fees (its closest rival is Ashcroft House, where fees can approach £8,000) are not paying for gold bath taps or deep pile carpets.

"This is not Hilton for the kids," said Mr Priest, agreeing with an Arab colleague that luxury would make the children lazy. And laziness – among teachers as much as the children – is strictly forbidden.

Though all children go through a battery of different entry tests, the intention is primarily to weed out those who are unwilling to work. This is seen as more important than academic ability.

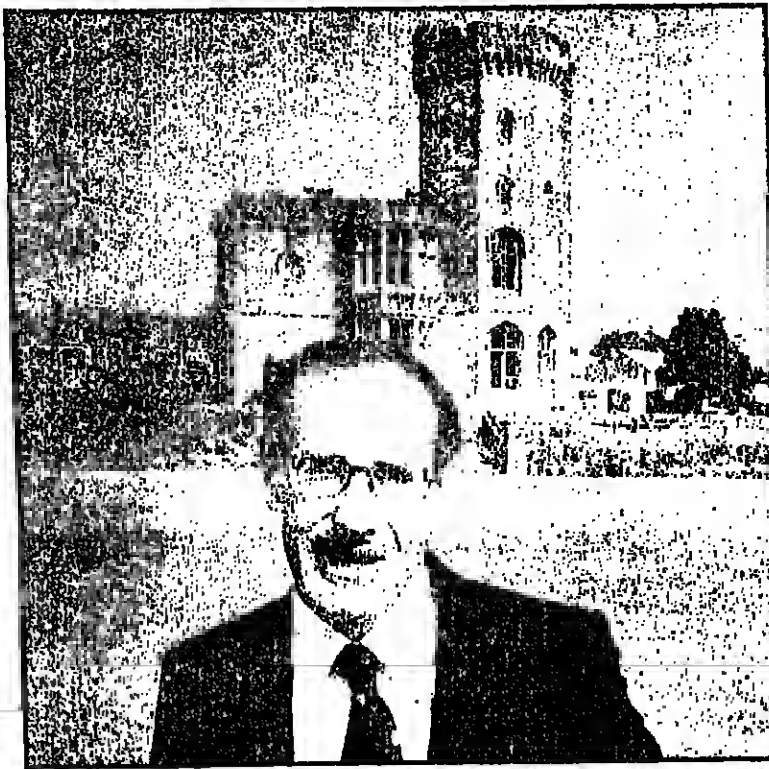
"The school prides itself in accepting and successfully teaching children that could be classified as slightly below average ability," says the school's prospectus.

To ensure that no child lags behind the school has installed a Wang computer system that will assess his or her progress through constant tests and exams. Any weakness is immediately corrected through intensive private tuition, outside normal class time.

"We expect the teachers to exert high academic pressure throughout the school starting from nursery and kindergarten," the prospectus adds. "There is less stress on socializing and more stress on academic achievement, – that is, less play and more work."

Continuous assessment applies to staff as well. They face the prospect of having a senior member of staff regularly sitting through their lessons, to keep an eye on their punctuality and their readiness to smile, and to ensure they do not devote one jot from the centrally-controlled curriculum.

The curriculum is common to all



Left: Rodney Priest. Above: a classroom scene at Ashwick Hall

similar to on parents approaching individual teachers about their children. All questions go through Mr Priest, who can produce the child's up-to-date computer file at a moment's notice.

The immediate uncertainty facing the school is now many pupils it will have at the start of the term. It has already been running a summer school for 74 children, providing holiday enrichment, and is expecting somewhere in the region of 100 to 200 pupils full time.

It is unlikely to appeal to more fundamental Muslims, however. Girls and boys are strictly supervised whenever they are together, but the school is not a religious foundation, and the atmosphere is Western and cosmopolitan.

Its values are not those of the traditional British public school, and similarities between the two are largely coincidental. For example, the Choueifat school uses a disciplinary system based on sneaking. Pupils are expected to report persistent offenders and the teachers are required to encourage it.

French will be taught as well as English and Arabic. Drama, dance, and music will have an important place along with sports and PE, but these will be extra-curricular.

One feature of the school's approach is an absolute ban on pupils taking notes (teachers have to provide full notes for every lesson), and a

## Women not a factor in college row

The much-publicized disagreement between a fellow of Peterhouse College, Cambridge, and Lord Dacre, Master of the college, is believed to centre on personal difficulties rather than matters of policy such as the admission of women.

Dr Hallford Croft, director of studies in mathematics for the past 20 years, wrote a strongly-worded letter to Lord Dacre (better known as the historian, Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper). This so angered Lord Dacre that he removed Dr Croft's name from the list of fellows to be re-elected this autumn.

Normally the re-election of fellows every five years is a formality. But Dr Croft's absence from the list to be re-elected means that he will technically cease to be a fellow before the start of term.

But it is thought that Dr Croft will be reinstated when the college's governing body next meets in October.

Dr Croft and Lord Dacre do not differ much in their strongly conservative views. Both are opposed to the admission of women to the college, although the reform has now been approved by the governing body and the necessary change to the statutes simply awaits the approval of the Privy Council.

## Parents save Liverpool primary

Sir Keith Joseph, Education Secretary, has given in to pressure from Liverpool parents and the Labour-controlled education authority and agreed to re-open the Hornington County Primary School.

Parents have been mounting a round-the-clock vigil to keep the school open since its closure was abruptly announced 24 hours before the end of last term. Last week, they reopened it for summer activities and managed to attract more than 100 children (the school previously had 70 pupils).

The school's reprieve, which follows recent meetings at the Department of Education with Mr Bob Dunn, schools minister, was agreed on condition that Liverpool education authority find suitable alternative premises for it from next September – and find it properly in the meantime.

The department's letter also makes it clear that Hornington has been saved on the understanding that Liverpool will close primary schools elsewhere. It stresses "the disproportionate expense and the educational disadvantages which flow from the City's rapidly falling number of primary age pupils" and the difficulties of trying to deal with the problem placement.

## Franked for failure

by Diane Spencer

The inner city school system is a franking machine which stamps "certified failure" on most of its pupils, according to the author of a book published this week about life in Hackney, east London.

Seven out of 10 Hackney children left school labelled as failures in 1978, Mr Paul Harrison said. 28 per cent of fifth formers left with no certificate – more than twice the national average

of 13 per cent. Yet in primary and secondary schools, there is no evidence that educational provision is worse than elsewhere in London. Home backgrounds are the dominant factor, he says in his book, "Inside the Inner City" (Penguin £3.95). Schools with largely working class catchment areas have a much lower standard of intake than those in middle class areas.

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## Tertiary plan turned down

Lancashire County Council's plans to set up a tertiary college in the Rossendale Valley have been rejected by Sir Keith Joseph.

In a letter to the county council earlier this month, the Education Secretary said he had turned down the proposal because of "the widespread and popular support" for keeping the sixth forms at Boeup and Rawtenstall Grammar School and Haslington High School.

The proposals were "primarily a matter of reorganizing the pattern of provision rather than of rationalizing

accommodation in the face of falling rolls." Sir Keith commented. He was not persuaded that the potential advantages claimed for the new system were sufficiently certain to warrant the introduction of a uniform 11-16 system and the loss of the sixth forms so strongly supported by parents.

Lancashire changed from Tory to Labour control in the May 1981 local elections. The Labour majority submitted its plans for a tertiary system – one of the main planks of the party's education policy – at the beginning of this year.

## Special Education in Scotland

With the introduction on January 1 of the new regulations governing special education, there is an urgent need for all teachers to become more familiar with the challenges of teaching handicapped children, in the ordinary classroom as well as in special schools and classes. During January, The Times Educational Supplement Scotland published a series of articles on special education: how individual authorities are reacting to the new regulations; how parents are coping; a case study of an individual school; the implications for teacher training. These have now been reprinted in a six-page format and are available for 50p each (including postage) from the address below.

Please send your cheque/postal order (no cash please) made payable to Times Newspapers Limited to: The Times Educational Supplement Scotland, 56 Hanover Street, Edinburgh EH2 2DZ.

## Equality campaigners told to look at Europe

by Hilary Wilce

European laws and policies could offer a lot of muscle to people in the United Kingdom who are pressing for equality in work experience, careers guidance, and practical skills training in schools, a new guide on women's rights advises.

Although education is not specifically mentioned in the Treaty of Rome, policy developments have led the EEC to become highly involved in schooling as well as in vocational training, the book points out.

But as yet the powers of European law have not been brought fully into play in enforcing the rights of women. While the Equal Treatment Directive says there must be equality of access to vocational training, no test case has been brought before the European Court of Justice to establish what this means.

It is possible, the authors suggest, that it could cover such practices as providing only domestic science equipment, and not heavy craft facilities, in girls' schools, or offering differing careers advice and work experience opportunities to boys and girls.

The guide gives a clear and concise outline of European structures and policies, and warns that women could lose important rights if a future



European laws could help to ensure that schools provide heavy craft facilities for girls.

Labour government were to withdraw EEC membership.

It cites the successful action brought by the EEC Commission against the British Government, which led to the amending of the equal pay legislation to include work of equal value, as an illustration of how European influence can help women's rights in this country.

Women's Rights and the EEC: A Guide for Women in the UK, published by Rights of Women Europe, 1983. £3.00.

## Jewish communities join forces

by Bert Lodge

A new private Jewish day school which is to open in London next year represents a triumph of co-operation between the Ashkenazi and Sephardi communities.

The school will be situated in a building adjoining the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Synagogue in Blenheim Vale but is also being supported by the Bayswater Synagogue.

The Spanish and Portuguese synagogue congregation is Sephardi and originally from North Africa and the Middle East as well as the Iberian peninsula) while the Bayswater Synagogue belongs to the Polish-German Ashkenazi community.

Rabbi Abraham Levy, honorary principal, explained: "The tension arose for the Sephardim to view the Ashkenazim as the mainstay of Anglo-Jewry, the Ashkenazim as its backbone."

"Faced, however, with a steadily young Jewish population in inner London, leaders of the neighbouring Malton Vale synagogues have elected to pool their resources in an independent venture. It may well signal a new era of Anglo-Jewish unity."

The school, to be known as the Jewish Preparatory School, will open on September 1 with two classes catering for three to five-year-olds.



## Concern on special needs

by Diane Spencer

At least half the students in teacher training receive no instruction on how to teach children with special educational needs in ordinary schools, says a report published this week.

The Royal Society for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR) surveyed 130 colleges, polytechnics and university education departments between last October and April 1983 to discover the extent of initial and in-service training regarding children with special educational needs.

Mrs Judith Male, the association's education officer who wrote the report, said this week: "It would be disgraceful if opponents of integration were able to claim that this policy is a failure, not because handicapped children are unable to cope with ordinary schools, but because teachers are inadequately prepared and trained to cope with handicapped children."

RADAR is concerned that integration should succeed, she said. The report showed that training had improved since the publication of the Warnock report in 1978, but it was still inadequate. The association would prefer a compulsory element for special educational needs in initial training, she added.

## Placing service gets underway

An advisory service for the thousands of young people who have just received their A level results is now operating throughout the country until the end of September.

The Advanced Further Education Information Service - a partnership between polytechnics, colleges, local education authorities and the Department of Education - offers information on vacancies in degree and diploma courses.

More than 500 advisory officers will help students whose results are either better or worse than expected to find a suitable place. Names, addresses and telephone numbers of these officers are available from local education or careers officers.

## Scots glue-sniff ruling could ease legal fix

by Biddy Passmore

The ruling by a Scottish High Court judge that selling glue-sniffing "kits" to children is a crime under Scottish law may help the Government out of a legal impasse - at least north of the border.

Ministers have seriously considered whether a ban could be placed on selling or supplying solvents to children like the ban which exists for alcohol and tobacco.

But they have so far concluded it would be impossible to frame a law which could be enforced, chiefly because almost any volatile substance, including some common household products, can be abused.

The only statute specifically concerned with glue-sniffing was passed in May and simply adds solvent abuse to the grounds on which children may

be referred to children's panels for compulsory care in Scotland.

Last week, however, Lord Avonside, sitting in the High Court in Edinburgh, said the common law should be used where Parliament was having difficulty in dealing with a problem.

He ruled that if substances were supplied to someone knowing that he would use them to endanger health and life, the supplier had acted criminally under the common law.

Lord Avonside, rejected pleas by brothers, Khellu and Ahmad Raju, who had challenged their indictment of supplying at least 18 children aged between eight and 15 with solvents - particularly glue - and bags for inhalation at their shop in Glasgow earlier this year.

It was also alleged that in exchange for the solvents they received stolen goods from nine of the children.

Defence counsel had argued that supplying glue-sniffing kits was not a crime under Scottish law - a plea which was successful in a similar case in 1978.

Lord Avonside, granted the brothers leave to appeal to three High Court judges - who may overturn his ruling - and postponed their trial until October 17.

The Scottish ruling cannot set a

precedent in English law, as the two legal systems are different. Nor is it clear if English common law could be interpreted in the same way, as supplying solvents would not appear to come under the heading of "supplying dangerous drugs" or "administering a noxious substance". So far, no English case involving glue-sniffing has come to the High Court.

Meanwhile, Department of Health and Social Security ministers are still analysing the responses to a consultative document on ways to control the menace of glue-sniffing, which is said to have caused the deaths of 120 young people since 1980.

Many of those consulted, including the National Association of Head Teachers, urged the Government not to overreact. It was thought that too much publicity might encourage children to experiment. The problem was best dealt with professionally.

An English Private Member's Bill providing for the temporary detention of young people found in public places under the influence of "toxic substances" was introduced on July 20 by Mr Neville Trotter, Conservative MP for Tyne and Wear, like Glasgow, has a high incidence of glue-sniffing. But it is too low down the list to stand any chance of becoming law.

## Local education authority estimates 1983/84

Local Education Authority	Pupil/Teacher Ratio		Spending per child on books, educational & PE equipment, stationery & materials		Total unit costs (£)	
	Prim	Sec	Prim	Sec	Prim	Sec
London LEA	17.2	13.0	39	68	1113	1613
Outer London boroughs						
Barking & Dagenham	20.6	18.1	22	39	813	1085
Barnet	24.1	17.0	22	40	761	1138
Bexley	17.0	13.8	33	50	886	1313
Brent	22.6	15.6	25	48	715	1049
Bromley	22.2	16.7	23	41	736	1052
Croydon	18.3	14.8	27	50	808	1175
Ealing	23.4	15.4	24	48	705	1041
Enfield	17.9	13.0	31	55	1008	1380
Haringey	23.5	14.3	22	38	843	1063
Harrow	23.8	18.1	24	48	892	1094
Havering	21.8	15.6	25	46	791	1103
Hillingdon	18.4	14.8	28	40	825	1082
Hounslow	21.5	18.4	23	56	700	874
Kingston-upon-Thames	21.8	18.0	25	40	771	828
Merton	18.1	13.4	26	47	821	1288
Newham	22.3	18.6	21	43	692	1082
Redbridge	20.6	16.2	21	37	767	1001
Richmond-upon-Thames	24.8	17.1	25	38	865	872
Sutton	18.6	13.5	25	45	803	1263
Waltham Forest						
Total (20)	21.0	15.3	25	45	784	1109
Metropolitan districts						
Greater Manchester						
Stockport	23.7	18.3	23	38	815	920
Trafford	23.8	18.0	18	34	823	886
Wigan	23.8	18.8	25	36	775	1158
Oldham	21.1	15.5	25	38	677	867
Rochdale	22.7	14.7	21	38	684	1057
Salford	21.4	15.8	28	48	898	889
Tameside	24.2	16.8	21	38	823	800
Stockport	22.3	15.8	23	32	862	932
Trafford	22.0	16.2	15	27	644	938
Wigan	21.7	15.6	21	37	670	856
Merseyside						
Knowsley	20.3	15.1	20	37	743	1072
Liverpool	20.5	15.8	23	41	814	1080
St Helens	28.1	18.7	18	27	827	843
Sefton	20.5	15.7	21	30	647	818
Wirral	22.4	17.5	21	30	641	800
South Yorkshire						
Barnsley	21.8	18.7	21	32	770	815
Doncaster	20.1	15.6	22	34	798	854
Rotherham	22.2	18.8	20	31	642	1052
Sheffield	20.5	15.6	32	40	612	1052
Tyne and Wear						
Gateshead	18.4	15.4	25	36	748	884
Newcastle upon Tyne	18.6	15.1	14	27	625	1102
North Tyneside	24.2	15.0	24	36	741	958
South Tyneside	19.3	15.1	21	41	749	1027
Sunderland	21.5	16.0	17	30	681	833
West Midlands						
Birmingham	21.4	15.8	12	23	683	814
Coventry	22.9	18.2	22	33	723	890
Dudley	21.7	17.1	17	34	638	862
Sandwell	21.1	15.4	21	35	714	883
Sothell	22.0	18.0	18	38	572	887
Walsall	18.5	14.0	20	40	786	1072
Wolverhampton	18.8	15.0	29	48	830	1008

## Slight improvement in secondary staffing ratio

Pupil/teacher ratios are starting to improve in secondary schools because of falling rolls, according to figures just released by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.

Estimates for the current financial year show that the ratio in secondary schools should improve from 16.5 pupils per teacher to 16.4 between January 1983 and January 1984. This is because the number of pupils over 11 will fall by 2.1 per cent, from 4m to 3.9m, while the number of teachers will fall by only 0.7 per cent, from 241,000 to 239,500.

In primary schools, where rolls will fall by 3 per cent, teacher numbers are expected to drop by 1.2 per cent, producing a continuation in last year's improvement in ratios. Between last January and next, they should have narrowed from 22.3 to 21.9.

Overall, the figures show that the 104 English and Welsh LEAs plan to spend 5.6 per cent more this year than last (a total of £11,718m, of which £735m will be met by specific grants).

Authorities have 200,000 fewer pupils and 440 fewer schools on which to spend the money. But the increase does not quite keep pace with an average inflation rate of 6 per cent.

The biggest proportional rises in spending are on the careers service, sports and social facilities, post-school education and the educational psychology service, which are

budgeted to get increases ranging from 11.7 to 14.2 per cent.

Startling differences between authorities continue. Brent has the best primary pupil-teacher ratio in the country at 17.1, just beating the Inner London Education Authority at 17.21. The worst is still in Hereford and Worcester, with 25.7, which recently joined the select group of authorities whose cuts are causing HM Inspectors particular concern.

In secondary schools, the best ratio of 12 pupils per teacher is found in both LEAs and Haringey and the worst in Leeds, with 18.7. Leeds is also spending least on books and equipment at both primary and secondary level (£9 and £14 respectively, the same figures as last year), although its primary pupil/teacher ratio is one of the best in the country.

The most generous spender on books and equipment, as ever, is the LEA, which also tops the league of spending per pupil in both primary and secondary schools. Next comes Haringey, which just exceeds the £1,000 per pupil mark at primary level and spends £1,380 at secondary level.

The lowest spenders are Dudley in the primary sector, which is planning to spend only £396, and Wakefield in the secondary sector (£784). The three highest spending authorities - the LEA, Brent and Haringey - are all expected to be caught by the Government's plan to limit rate rises in selected councils.

## IN BRIEF

### Good Samaritans

A new 30-page booklet provides information on the industrial and professional organizations that offer financial help to higher education students. "Sponsorship 1984" lists the grants available to students taking a first degree or BTEC higher course in subjects such as computer studies, catering and engineering.

Copies have been distributed to schools, colleges and careers offices but single copies are also available from: The Careers and Occupational Information Centre, Manpower Services Commission, Dept C W, c/o Papworth Industries, Papworth Everard, Cambridge CB3 9RG; £1.50 inc. postage.

### Self-defence

The women's committee of a Labour-controlled London borough is urging all secondary schools in the area to provide self-defence classes for girls as part of their physical education. Camden Council women's committee has written to the Inner London Education Authority and all local head-teachers asking that its suggestion be adopted.

### Foreign students

The number of overseas students fell by 22 per cent between 1978-79, when full-cost fees were introduced, and 1981-82. Between 1980-81 and 1981-82 the number dropped by 15,400 to 93,000, according to the latest figures from the British Council.

### Grant restored

Parents of handicapped children who receive an attendance allowance will no longer lose the benefit when their children are in temporary residential care, Mr Tony Newton, Minister for the Disabled, has announced. The weekly allowance of between £17.50 and £26.25 was previously only paid if a child was at home or in hospital.

Nick Wood meets the crab that could help school biology keep its head above water

## The discrete charm of little *Carcinus maenas*

The humble shore crab could be the answer for school biology departments struggling to maintain expensive stocks of mice and rats.

The idea comes from Dr Peter Hogarth, a biology lecturer at the University of York, who normally keeps around 25 crabs in plastic cake boxes in his laboratory.

He points out that the crabs, *Carcinus maenas* in academic circles, are free, plentiful and cheap and easy to look after in the lab. They can also give children a fascinating insight into the general principles of natural selection and animal behaviour.

Dr Hogarth, a former A level examiner, said that the possibility of using crabs in schools first occurred to him when he was marking the ecology section of A level biology papers and interviewing candidates for places at the university.

"These questions were done badly. A lot of schools don't know what to look for when they send youngsters out on ecology field trips," he said.

His solution is for them to head for the nearest beach - though not one covered in shingle - where by observing and recording the numbers of the crabs and their markings, size and sex, youngsters will gain a picture of evolution in action.

An afternoon's spade-work will also pay rich dividends for the school's biology lab, he says. He reckons to have collected as many as 100 crabs in a couple of hours foraging on the



Dr Peter Hogarth and friends: "Obviously, I'm biased but I like them... they are pretty".

with a crab. "Obviously, I'm biased but I like them. They are pretty and interesting animals. You might get a nip from one, but it won't do you any harm. A bite from a mouse can give you tetanus or Weil's disease."

"The species is typical of a large and successful group of crustaceans and, as such, an acceptable representative species for demonstration and dissection purposes", Dr Hogarth writes.

Dr Hogarth, who admits to having a soft spot for *Carcinus*, discounted suggestions that some children - and teachers - might not fancy tangling

Independent Television for Schools and Colleges

## Out of school

An opportunity for viewers to see two of the programmes to be shown in next term's *Middle English* series for schoolchildren aged 9-12 years. The preview will show one episode from 'A Game of Soldiers', a new play, set in the Falklands, and specially written for the series by Jan Needle. You will also see extracts from 'The Hairy Hand and the Phantom of Bluebell Hill', a programme about urban legends.



Presented by Dave Arthur  
Series Producer Peter Tobern

Tuesday, August 30th 11 - 11.30 p.m.  
Friday, September 2nd 12.30 - 1.00 p.m.  
(Repeat transmission)



## NEWS

# Coventry plan for curriculum could raise leaving age

by Nick Wood

A move which would, in effect, raise the school leaving age to 18 would give children the chance to pursue a range of educational and training opportunities within a comprehensive framework, the British Association for the Advancement of Science annual meeting in Brighton was told.

Mr Alan Sandry, chief inspector for Coventry, read a paper prepared by Mr Bob Aitken, the city's director of education, which sets out the authority's plans for a radical overhaul of the secondary school curriculum.

Mr Aitken argues that from the age of 14 youngsters should be offered a more flexible range of courses. He is particularly keen on ensuring a better deal for two groups - 16-year-olds who want to sample a range of jobs before deciding on a career or going on to further training; and 14-year-olds who feel they are ready for work experience.

Progress depends on jettisoning the traditional two-year subject courses leading to O level and CSE and their replacement by modules - short courses lasting, say, 25 hours, which could stand alone or lend on to further study in the same area.

The Aitken paper said: "From 14 to 18 and beyond, the matching between the wide range of aspirations and the courses required might best be achieved by organizing the curriculum in modules or units rather than subjects."

"For example, the mathematics curriculum might be divided into some units designed to be concerned with



Bob Aitken

the mathematics of everyday life, some units concerned with mathematics requirements for industry and commerce at various levels and some units required as a preparation for more advanced courses.

"At 14, a student might do only the 'everyday life' units but the important feature of the system is that at any stage he could progress by adding further units. In a similar way, other subjects could be formulated as units with a variety of aims and objectives."

A key feature of the plan is the way it cuts across traditional boundaries in schools and further education and, by allowing people the chance to come back to school, opens up the prospect of "comprehensive education for life", Mr Aitken believes.

It also "deinstitutionalizes" education by allowing at least some teaching to move out of the classroom and into other centres better equipped to handle the material involved. But major questions, such as the range of units on offer, their length and methods of assessment, still had to be answered.

A switch to modular learning would also hasten the pace of curriculum change, the meeting heard. By cutting down the length of courses, room could be made for new topics such as work experience, health education and peace studies.

Fourteen-year-olds would not then face the "wholly irrational choice between, say, the whole of economics and the whole of physics".

The Aitken paper added: "An advantage of the proposed modular system is that it would allow a student to achieve a much better balance without offending against the integrity of subjects which quite properly has its advocates. It would probably lead to much tighter teaching since the learning objectives of each module would need to be specified, and it would facilitate change."

Mr Carlton Duncan, head of Wyke Manor Upper School, Bradford, said teachers often thought that West Indians were only good at sport and dancing, while Asians were quiet and well behaved.

As a member of the Rampton, now the Swann, committee on the education of ethnic minority children, he had found numerous examples of unfounded, prejudiced views among white children.

Children did not change when they got older. Countless school visits had confirmed that these youngsters later became the teachers who perpetuated these attitudes.

One head had told Mr Duncan that he did not know how many black children were in his school as he did not notice colour and treated all children alike. Yet within minutes the head had said: "The trouble with West Indians is that they have a ghetto-like mentality."

Mr Duncan added: "Nothing is more inequitable than the well-meant but misguided adoption of the equal treatment for all principle. Pupils are not alike."

Teachers should be aware of their pupils' religious, cultural, racial and linguistic backgrounds. "Ignore this and we leave them behind. The Eurocentric park will not be a palatable menu for all. Some will starve."

He called for a balanced, more positive approach to the curriculum for all pupils, particularly in all-white schools. "I reject black studies. I reject the Eurocentric curriculum."



British Association at Brighton

## Courses defended

The widely-held idea that vocational training courses such as the Youth Training Scheme trap young people in degrading and demeaning jobs came under attack at the meeting.

Mr Chris Hayes, of the Institute in Manpower Studies in London, said that the "skill ownership" approach planned for the YTS, which starts next month, was specifically designed to give young people the ability and confidence to cope with the vagaries of the future. It would help youngsters whether or not they were successful in finding a job.

He said: "Skill ownership describes

what young people should take with them at the end of the youth training year, what they should be able to redeploy in other work, whether in or out of public employment.

"It is based on the competence to use and marshal knowledge and skills as a result, to use effectively to achieve a purpose. A person demonstrates skill ownership if he is competent to perform effectively in a real life situation, can find out what he needs to know and be able to do in an unfamiliar situation, and can redeploy his competence to perform effectively in unfamiliar circumstances."

## Why 'work' poses threat to academic timetable

The new subject on the secondary school timetable is "work", and it is set to transform the nature and organization of education, Professor John Eggleston, head of the department of education at the University of Keele, told the meeting.

Academic schooling for most pupils is at risk, he said, citing Swedish research that suggests that a school week made up of three days of work experience and two days of normal lessons would leave academic achievement unimpaired.

Even sixth-forms and colleges of further education might find themselves redundant, he said. The Government is known to have considered proposals to extend the thinking behind the Youth Training Scheme to take in 16-year-olds planning to enter professions such as medicine, law and accountancy.

"Already in a growing number of occupational categories - such as motor vehicle maintenance for boys and shop work for girls - entry has become almost exclusively through Manpower Services Commission schemes and not direct from school. Even the remaining monopoly of the schools - the obtaining of 'academic'



John Eggleston

qualifications - may be threatened by MSC initiatives," he said.

Professor Eggleston explained how political and economic thinking had brought an increasingly vocational curriculum to schools.

The impact of mass unemployment, particularly for the young, and the emergence of increasingly specialized occupations, remote from everyday



Unemployment... social values at stake

experience, had caused a collapse in the traditional transfer from the classroom to the factory or office. What has arrived on the school timetable is something to be taught, in much the same way as the "3 Rs" and science were once taken out of the hands of family, church and community where it was realized they were incapable of imparting the necessary skills for adult life.

But, in contrast to the past, schools are not being allowed the luxury of monopoly in the creation of schemes to prepare young people for the workplace. Unlike subjects such as maths or history, work directly determines future life chances and has massive political overtones, most clearly seen in the significance attached to unemployment totals.

Schools have devised work experience schemes, but these are in danger of being "diluted" by the Government-inspired MSC. Professor Eggleston said.

The new Training and Vocational Education Initiative for children aged 14 to 18, beginning next term in pilot form in 14 L.E.A.s, further complicates the picture, he added. He predicted that it would "mushroom", fueling the case for a richer vocational flavour to the post-14 curriculum.

"There are many arguments in favour of a vast expansion of pre-vocational/work-experience schooling. It may help to reduce the continuing disadvantage of many young pupils, particularly those who are black and from inner city areas.

"It may well diminish the huge cost of the post-school MSC operation and utilize our schools and their resources more effectively."

But there are dangers too. Lessons rich in vocational relevance may lure young people into making "premature" career choices that they would later come to regret. And academic schooling could become the preserve of the independent sector.

Whether work experience schemes and the TVEI spell the death knell for YTS would, in the end, depend on whether they catch the interest and imagination of the young people for whom they were designed, he said.

## View of idle unemployed dismissed

The popular belief that the unemployed are lying in bed all hours, watching television and videos, amusing themselves in pubs, clubs and sports centres and, from time to time, cashing in on the black economy, was roundly dismissed at the meeting.

Two papers, from staff at the Science Policy Research Unit at the University of Sussex, quoted findings showing that for the vast majority on the dole unemployment is a "curse" not a liberation from the trials of work.

Mr Ian Miles, reporting the results of interviews with 100 employed and 300 unemployed people in Brighton, said: "Unemployment as it is experienced today remains a miserable and frustrating condition for most of those afflicted."

Professor Marie Jahoda, professor emerita at the university, said: "Not just material losses are involved; the

basic social values on which a civilized society should rest are at stake when millions of people are assigned to the scrap-heap, while others prefer to look in another direction. This danger, it seems to me, makes all talk of liberation futile and stamps mass unemployment as a curse."

Both speakers concentrated on the social penalties of unemployment, which typically halves previously low incomes.

Professor Jahoda based her conclusion on a review of the research on the social and psychological effects of unemployment. This showed that the unemployed feel "depressed, bored and useless" and that their "psychological malaise" was principally the product of being cut off from their friends and colleagues at work rather than a sudden drop in living standards.

Those who coped best with being out of work were those who found other avenues, such as voluntary

work, that met these basic needs.

Meanwhile in Mr Miles's survey of those unemployed scored lower than the employed on an index of psychological well-being, but the results showed significant variation.

He said: "Unemployed men who maintain a wide range of social contacts, who keep themselves active and involved in social projects or collective purposes, who keep a regular routine structure in their lives and who feel themselves respected by the world at large report fewer of the negative psychological symptoms associated with unemployment."

Mr Miles also revealed how the jobless spend their time. The average jobless man puts in four hours a day on domestic chores, household repairs and shopping, compared with just one hour by the man at work.

## Disruption is becoming a normal part of school life

Disruptive pupils were responsible for 144 serious incidents in one week at a large mixed multi-racial comprehensive, according to a research project, details of which were released to the meeting.

Alarming though this was, the disruption did not take the form of violence or aggression against the teacher, said Dr David Stead, a leading figure in the research.

Dr Stead, senior lecturer at Goldsmith's College, London, said that teachers interviewed after the incidents agreed that the behaviour was often the "reactive response by pupils to what they perceive as the inappropriate, unfair or aggressive behaviour of the teacher initially."

Disruption in this school and another outer London borough comprehensive that he monitored was so widespread as to be a normal feature. At the same time neither school was obviously disorderly and in both there was evidence that most pupils were learning satisfactorily.

Teachers at the schools described disruptive behaviour as "clustering around, rowdiness, abuse, bad language, talking, chatting and rejecting authority".

Pupils interviewed in the research project complained of unfairness, with only some pupils being punished. Teachers were accused of tending to blame previous troublemakers.

Dr Stead said disruption in schools had been the focus of attention throughout Western Europe and the United States over the past 10 years. But many of the worries were now seen to have been exaggerated.

He quoted ILEA figures which showed that only 1 per cent of the authority's 300,000 pupils may be disruptive and their teachers risk assault once in 85 years.

"It may be," he concluded, "that we



British Association at Brighton

have to get used to the fact that schools today are more disrupted than they were in the past. Or, to put it another way, that comprehensive schools dramatize the problems of behaviour which were the common experience of the elementary and secondary modern schools.

"It is the price that we have to pay for seeking to resolve rather than to ignore differences. The separation which was implicit in the existence of a two-tier system together with separate schools for the handicapped created the illusion that schools could be as free from conflict as the grammar school. They cannot."

"If the only way to create conflict free schools is to separate out discordant elements by kind of educational upbring, many may think this is too high a price to pay."

In the meantime, schools might usefully consider the structures which could best contain an optimum or healthy level of disruption, both for the sake of teachers and pupils."

David Lister



## Lifting the lid on low protein lunchboxes

The contents of the average school lunch box have caused dismay to a sociologist and a dietitian.

With education authorities cutting back on school dinners and prices rising, far too many children are getting through the day on a diet of sandwiches, crisps and chocolate biscuits, they say.

Fewer than half the 100 youngsters surveyed regularly ate a balanced meal - one including protein, calcium, fruit or vegetables, carbohydrate and fat. One in three always unwrapped a lunch that was "definitely unsatisfactory". The items most commonly omitted were fruit or vegetables and, less often, protein and calcium.

Nutritional factors are often over- ridden by considerations of cost, convenience and a youngster's likes and dislikes, Miss Platt said. These tend to be strongly held and idiosyncratic.

Sweetened yoghurt, crisps and chocolate biscuits topped the popularity poll, with cheese, a widely-used sandwich filling, the least popular.

Typical of the kind of meal that

caused Miss Platt dismay were the contents of one child's lunchbox which bulged with four Marmite sandwiches, a cake, a jam tart, a Mars bar, biscuits, two packets of crisps and an orange drink.

Miss Platt and Miss Jennifer Clark, a dietitian with the Brighton health authority, also interviewed about 20 mothers to discover the factors that governed their choice of foods.

Only three said they aimed to provide a "balanced diet" for their children. Most talked in terms of "good" and "bad" foods: the latter meaning items such as sweets and biscuits.

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## NEWS

## Budget too low to stop rot

by Biddy Passmore

The crumbling state of Northern Ireland's secondary schools has been highlighted by the chief officer of one of the province's education and library boards.

Large sums would have to be spent on improved maintenance next year "to avoid controlled and maintained schools in this area rotting away", Mr Bob Hamilton, chief officer of the North-Eastern board, said in a gloomy report on the financial prospects.

He told the board's monthly meeting that making good years of neglect caused by government cuts would absorb the £400,000 the board can expect to receive through the redistribution of funds from Belfast to other parts of Northern Ireland. And

there would be no money for new capital projects, although 16 were ready to go.

Northern Ireland's Department of Education had provisionally allocated the board an increase of only 4 per cent over this year's budget, Mr Hamilton told the meeting. This meant it would have to make a cut of £60,000 in current spending if inflation ran at 6 per cent.

The effect of such cuts would be "drastic in some cases", Mr Hamilton said. Among the bleak options he listed were closing all teachers' centres, cutting out swimming, and slashing capitation and the library and youth services.



Nicholas Scott

## If you want to get ahead... help yourself

Self-help groups for women managers who want to be more effective are being funded by the Manpower Services Commission, under a new two-year programme.

Teachers keen on getting senior jobs and education officers could be eligible to join in the women-only groups, according to Dr Tom Boydell, of Sheffield City Polytechnic, who is developing the project.

Education officers would be eligible to join in the group being set up for women working in local government in Nottinghamshire, Dr Boydell said. "And if we were to get in touch with a group of teachers who have definite

ideas about wanting to be put in managerial positions in schools, then they would certainly be eligible for funds."

News of the programme comes in the wake of a survey showing that the number of women heads and deputy heads in schools in England and Wales is low and dropping (TES, July 29).

Dr Boydell said the MSC would be putting about £31,000 into the project over the next two years. He expected at least five self-development groups to be set up. They would be a mixture of those based on a geographical area, and those based on a specific field such as banking or community work.

## Research probe ordered

A one-man study has been ordered of the balance between research commissioned by the DES through the five research councils and the University Grants Committee, and research commissioned by the other Government departments.

The inquiry is to be carried out by Sir Ronald Mason, former chief scientist at the Ministry of Defence and now professor of chemistry at Sussex University.

He must report within two months to Sir David Phillips, chairman of the Advisory Board for the Research Councils (ABRC), who commissioned the study.

The ABRC's last annual report said that the dual support system for research - research councils and universities - was breaking down.

## TV team may make film on economy

The makers of the TV series *Yes Minister* could be commissioned by Sir Keith Joseph, the Education Secretary, to make a film for children spelling out the economic facts of life.

This is understood to have been one possibility canvassed by Sir Keith during discussions with officials and

HMI on how to make pupils understand the mysteries of the economy before they leave school.

This theme, long a hobby-horse of the Education Secretary, has come to the fore again and Sir Keith has circulated a two-page memo on the subject to senior officials which will be

discussed at a seminar after the summer holidays.

The memo has caused nervousness among some officials, who fear that Sir Keith might try to impose his strong, free-market views from the centre.

## Services schools severely criticized

Low standards in eight primary schools for the children of British Servicemen in Dortmund, West Germany, may get even worse if the high staff turnover continues, says a report by HM Inspectorate.

In a highly critical account of the eight schools, run by the Service Children's Education Authority, the Inspectorate finds much that is wrong both with the curriculum and teaching methods.

Generally the pace of work was too slow, children spent too much time on

repetitive tasks and became isolated. As a result "children's motivation is low and both the quantity and quality of response fall away sharply."

Opportunities for extending basic reading and written work were limited, and most maths teaching was confined to practising basic skills.

The schools themselves thought history and geography were a special problem. These subjects were usually approached through topics, though in one or two schools the topics being tackled during the autumn term did

not include any history or geography. Music was a great weakness in some of the schools, and drama and expressive movement were almost non-existent. Art and craft work was limited, and the quality of work did not improve as children moved up the school.

The quality of work in these areas was likely to remain poor until staff recognized their importance to the rest of the curriculum, the Inspectorate said.

The most serious obstacle to improving the quality of service children's education was high staff turnover. "If the system cannot persuade more heads to remain for a minimum of five years, and for deputy heads and senior staff to remain for three years, it will experience great difficulty, not only in raising standards, but in maintaining the present level," the report said.

A much closer check needed to be kept on locally employed teachers - their coming and going was "seriously interrupting and disrupting the education of large numbers of Service children." Promotions and transfers during the academic year made the position even worse.

Inspectors suggested broadening the scope of art and craft subjects, a more structured approach to the sports programme, a reassessment of the science syllabus, and provision of better facilities and equipment.

## HMI reports

HMI reports are available free of charge from the Department of Education and Science, Publications Despatch Centre, Honeyput Lane, Slough, Middlesex HA7 1AZ. Also available from I.C.E.A.s.

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## SCHOOL TO WORK

Wednesday afternoon in Bury St Edmunds, a pleasant and prosperous market town in the west of Suffolk. The sun beats down as the pens of pigs and cattle are despatched at a bewildering speed to their new owners - slow-moving men who seem little impressed by the auctioneer's chatter or his attempts to demonstrate the quality of his goods by bringing them to life with a whoop on the ramp. I try to avoid blinking as six piglets go for £28.

A mile away, Mr John Carnall, the area education officer, swelters in his office, where I join him to hear how Suffolk, a county that missed the first industrial revolution, is being brought face to face with the second and the full panoply of educational adventure which that implies - school/industry links, work experience, classroom technology, vocational training, school and teacher appraisal, curriculum review - the list is endless.

I try to wipe away the memories of miles of ripening corn and the smells of the market. All the same - for both us - it seems an unlikely assignment.

I begin by asking him the local youth unemployment rate. He's not sure, although he's convinced it is below the national average. But he goes on to talk enthusiastically about the business education links, bringing together teachers and industrialists, that have been set up in each of the county's three areas, about the textbook work experience scheme at Bury St Edmunds' King Edward VI upper school, about the twinning of schools with local firms, and about the appointment of a part-time industrial liaison officer at Great Cornard school, courtesy of a £3,000 grant from the Department of Industry.

Maybe Suffolk isn't so sleepy after all. But there's another strand to my prejudices, fuelled by *An English Journey*, Richard West's penetrating portrait of modern Britain, which marks out the East Anglian region, with its super-efficient agriculture, booming container port of Felixstowe, thriving small and not-so-small firms and flourishing professional classes, as one of the few places in the country to have ducked the recession.

Strangely, here at least, far from the despair of the cities, the tradition of academic abstraction can be allowed to linger on.

What figures are immediately available tend to bear out this view. In Stowmarket, home of ICI's paint factory - the biggest in Europe - only 3 in 100 of last year's school-leavers are still looking for work. Mr Carnall hazards that the situation is much the same in the bustling town outside.

One of those grappling with the problems of success is Mrs Meri Thackray, unemployment specialist in the careers office, who is trying to round up youngsters for the area's youth training schemes that get under way next month.

Her worry is that she will not be able to find enough unemployed young people to fill the 1,430 places the Manpower Services Commission has allocated.

"More young people have found work than we thought. A lot are phoning up and saying: 'I won't need a place. I've found a job.'"

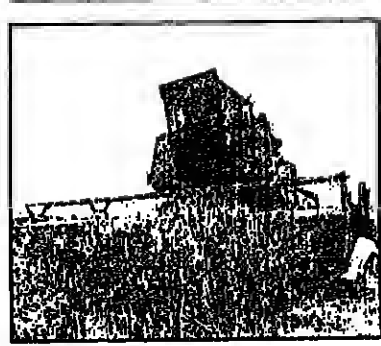
As she goes on to explain, it's a message calculated to drive the big firms, such as Debenhams, who have landed the lucrative managing agencies for the YTS, to distraction. They could be out of pocket if they fail to fill their places.

"I'm sure we will be over-subscribed with YTS places," Mr Carnall adds.

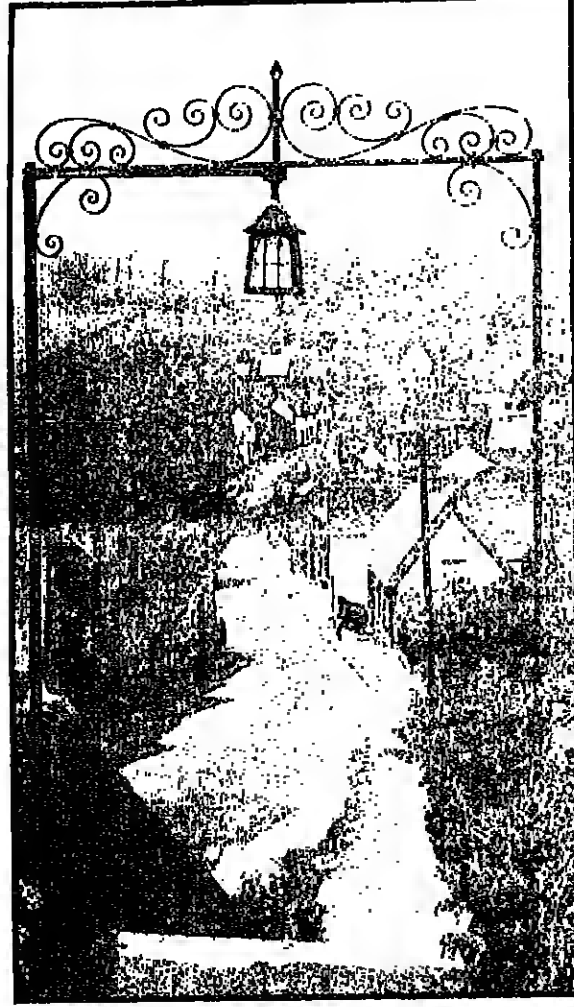
But, as they both point out, the picture is not as rosy as it seems. Many youngsters are hedging their bets and waiting for their exam results before deciding whether to tangle with Norman Tebbit's brainchild or settle for the safer pastures of school.

Others fear that the YTS will be no better than the Youth Opportunities Programme, which has a dismal reputation throughout the country. For them, a job, any job, is likely to seem a better bet. Mrs Thackray wonders how many will be back, knocking on her door, in three months' time.

King Edward VI, a 1,200-pupil 13-to-18 upper school of the type that predominates in the county, is twinned with Mann's, distributors of West German harvesting machinery. Mr Mike Moran, the forthright head, dismisses the notion that links with



Left: Schools have forged links with agriculture, the county's largest industry. Above: Willy Lot's cottage. Right: The picturesque village of Kersey.



Nick Wood travels to Suffolk to find out how schools are helping the children of Constable country prepare for the 21st century

## Sleepy hollow awakes

industry and work experience are a belated, if unsatisfactory, answer to the challenge of joblessness.

"It's mistaken to think work experience is for job sampling and to find employment. That's not the prime purpose at all."

"One of the main aims is the motivation of the youngsters themselves. They find the real world reinforces what the school has been saying and they come back with increased enthusiasm for school itself."

Irrespective of the merits of his argument, the school's scheme, which places all 350 of the fourth years with some 200 employers for an average of two weeks in the summer term, is splendidly organized.

For a time, the school becomes a job centre as the firms notify their "vacancies" and return job descriptions, the particulars of which are typed out on cards and posted on notice boards. The youngsters are then put through the mill that one day they will face for real - applying for the jobs that interest them and being interviewed by teachers or the employers themselves. Some, inevitably, have to take second or third best.

There is the usual crop of shop assistants, classroom helpers, factory hands, bank clerks and doctors' receptionists plus, naturally enough in Suffolk, farm labourers.

But some of King Edward's 15-year-olds land something out of the ordinary - like one boy, a keen golfer, who became an assistant professional for a week and another, less enviably, who wound up tending the borough council cemetery. He was told to bring a strong pair of boots and a packed lunch.

How, I wonder, has the school found so many employers willing to cooperate?

"It's so important you put out all your youngsters - then you get cooperation," Mr Moran says. "In the past, work experience schemes have had a bad name. If schools are going to put out their problem youngsters - as often happens - then that's a bad public relations. You need to put out people of first class calibre."

Not that it's all been plain sailing. His own "proselytizing" and the commitment of his careers staff - Mrs Lynn Manning, Mr Colin South and Mr Robin Ford - have been needed to overcome the resistance of staff and

parents alike in a school with a 45 per cent staying-on rate and an "academic" tag.

Elsewhere in the county, more evidence of the move towards a more relevant curriculum is put before me. At Orwell High in Felixstowe, a group of sixth-formers from schools throughout Suffolk have come together with representatives from industry to play the Metal Box game - a dauntingly realistic portrayal of the hazards of keeping a fledgling company afloat.

Half a dozen youngsters sit quietly while a buyer for the docks gives a long-winded account of how he came to be a buyer for the docks. They seem happier when they are allowed to go back to the intricacies of pricing policies, lending rates and advertising budgets.

There I meet Mr John Taylor, a science teacher and the embodiment of the school/industry twinning policy that is fast gaining ground throughout the county.

In his case, Argentina's loss has been Suffolk's gain. A former works manager, he came to teaching when his firm wanted to send him to the land of the generals. Since then he's made a speciality out of squirrelling goodies

out of private firms, using the children to despatch and chase a deluge of begging letters.

Back in 1978, when Ipswich Town won the FA Cup, his youngsters produced and sold 2,000 bottles of "Superblue" - a washing up liquid they made themselves from chemicals donated by industry.

The day I met him, fourth-formers were preparing to paint the classrooms. These days, in a low-spending authority, there's nothing unusual in that, but not many schools take self-help to the point of making their own paint.

Further north, in Lowestoft, technology is the force. At Kirkley High, Mr Keith Catling, the pioneer of a control technology course, is about to go into business. Despairing of industry ever producing educational hardware that fits the bill, he is setting up a company to make and market a circuit board he has devised.

And in the splendidly equipped workshops of nearby Benjamin Britten school, youngsters learn about practical problem-solving as they design, make, test and evaluate items as disparate as simple paddle steamers to microprocessor-controlled robotic arms.

"Some of the kids do projects that are outside our experience," Mr Paul Hancock, the head of the craft, design and technology department, says, as he shows me one attempt to build a better mousetrap. "It's amazing how ingenious they can be."

But the schools have had their disappointments too. Kirkley, Benjamin Britten and The Denes High, together with Lowestoft College of Further Education, were earmarked as the birthplace for Suffolk's contribution to the technical and vocational education initiative. The plan was to build on the existing strong links between the schools and the college, then to take in other schools in the area.

The bid failed (perhaps Sir Keith Joseph has been reading Richard West) but some elements survive - notably a City and Guilds 365 course and a course in theatre, leisure and recreation. Both will involve youngsters spending some time in school and some in the college.

Not that Suffolk has forgotten its roots. The authority has just launched the Suffolk Farm Project in conjunction with the *East Anglian Daily Times*.

Already 120 junior, middle and secondary schools have forged links with their local farms as part of a scheme intended to give children a greater understanding of the countryside and to strengthen the resources open to schools. The plan envisages youngsters of all ages regularly visiting the farm twinned with their school, using its resources in a variety of subjects and learning about the local environment.

As Mrs June Bowry, the environmental studies adviser, puts it: "Many children grow up with little understanding of the countryside even though agriculture is Suffolk's largest industry with an enormous influence on the county's landscape and wild life."

"It is essential for young people to become fully aware of the rural environment and its significance, and the only way this can be achieved is by direct contact with the people who live and work in the countryside."

Back in Ipswich I meet the man in the vanguard of this assault on Suffolk's image as an educational backwater, content to bask in the sunshine of unlooked-for prosperity. Mr Duncan Grahame, the chief education officer, is an ebullient Scot who four years ago quit the tenements of Strathclyde and headed south. Like me, he was prepared to find a "sleepy Suffolk".

"That's what I thought when I came here and to an extent it's true. The natives have an inbuilt tendency to disparage themselves."

But he also found a "high quality teaching force" with the dedication to work well beyond their contracted hours - in marked contrast to the "dispirited and union-minded" souls he had encountered in industrial areas where the final bell was the signal for "Le Mans" getaway from the school car park.

In other respects, he was less encouraged. The curriculum was "outdated" - a monument to the tradition of the nineteenth century - and links with industry took the form of trench warfare with businessmen and teachers hurling salvos of ill-informed abuse at one another.

On such unpromising ground, he set out to build an engine for change. "If you want to change the curriculum you do it by bringing in outside agencies. . . I believe that unless the curriculum in schools becomes a lot more relevant - both to industry and to the needs of all the pupils - we are just asking for it in terms of seeking new resources."

"It seemed to me that by having links with industry we could reduce some of the hostility which industry undoubtedly has for schools, which is often unsubstantiated, and the slightly lazier, inefficient but not uncommonly relevant things we are doing in schools could be sharpened up."

To begin with, the business education liaison panels were more talking shops, charged with bridging the great divide. Now, as I'd seen, they were engaged in practical schemes to bring schools and industry closer together. He was also quick to scotch the suggestion, fed by my visit to Bury St Edmunds, that Suffolk doesn't have a youth unemployment problem. Last January, 11.6 per cent of the county's 1982 school-leavers were still looking for work, some 35 per cent were in government training schemes. In June, combined adult and youth unemployment stood at 10 per cent against a national average of 12.5 per cent.

Compared with the industrial north, the figures are encouraging, but they mask "enormous" differences across the county. In Ipswich, Lowestoft and the "no man's land" of mid-Suffolk centring on Leiston, jobs are hard to come by.

"Overall, the MSC is worried about finding enough YTS places in Suffolk," he says, while conceding that the situation in the west of the county may well be different.

His final refrain is a familiar one. Suffolk is in the third division of educational spending. Understandably, Mr Graham finds it "galling".

"Our hang ups are more financial than anything else. I am convinced we have got the relationships and the people to bring success. But we're held up on financial grounds."

Young people think schools should do far more to prepare them for their working lives.

They want more practical lessons, and would prefer to leave school for a job, than for higher education.

These views come from a major international survey of the attitudes of young people in the developed world towards education and work.

In Sweden, Australia, Denmark and Canada, young people called for more vocational training and criticized school for being an isolated world where nothing can be learned about life.

Young people are also highly critical of the way schools treat less able pupils, according to the report. A young Scots boy, who left school early and is now a Venetian blind fitter, said that the attitude in his school towards pupils who did not qualify for O levels was "to hell with you". In Australia, pupils complained that teachers were patronizing and hostile to them.

A Swedish student is quoted as saying: "Teachers have to understand that young people cannot be interested in all that stuff that not even adults are interested in."

Even so, the survey, carried out by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, found no overall rejection of education. Most young people want to learn, the study points out. They value education, believe it will better their lives, and have very high expectations of what school can offer them.

In contrast, their views on work are that while jobs are necessary, very few jobs are interesting and meaningful, as well as well-paid and secure.

There is no evidence to support the widely-held view that today's young people are alienated, work-shy, idlers. However, there is a sizeable minority of youngsters who seem to lack positive values of any kind.

Among German youth, 30 per cent say they will do their best to escape work pressure, while 10 per cent say they see no purpose in life. In 1979, 13 per cent of Swedish 15- and 16-year-

olds were saying they saw alcohol and drugs as a way of making their lives richer.

Yet there is no evidence that dwindling job opportunities have made young people more defiant and critical. Rather the evidence is that they have come to place more value on such conservative values as economic security.

The study was carried out by the OECD's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation. It took two and a half years and surveyed evidence from 15 nationalities.

The report points out that the single greatest factor affecting the lives of young people appears to be the decline in their participation in the labour market. Along with this goes the increasing number of 16- to 24-year-olds who do not appear to belong either to the world of work or the world of education.

However, young people do not seem to be radically divorced from society. They demonstrate an emotional distance from political and social institutions, and are primarily concerned with fulfilling their personal needs in their private world of friends and family, but they remain concerned about the environment and nuclear power.

The study also found that: ● while young people of all classes are worried about unemployment, those from poorer backgrounds tend to assume a larger share of the blame; ● although young people clash with adults the arguments are rarely about basic cultural and social values; ● despite all attempts at positive action in schools, it is still working class youngsters and girls who face the bleakest prospects and the most limited opportunities.

"The single most powerful demand that that young people are formulating, implicitly or explicitly, is simply that for adult status, in its most traditional form, and through it for full integration into society alongside the elders," the report says. "The deprivation of social recognition through lack of work (perhaps the most recognizable badge of adulthood) is what is most sorely felt."

Education and Work: the views of the young, OECD, Paris 1983. Available from HMSO.

Sri Lankan troops deal with a looter . . . a major problem during last month's riots.

Sri Lanka

Stuart Little on relief work by Britons during the recent upsurge

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## OVERSEAS

# Mercy in the face of threatened murder



Sri Lankan troops deal with a looter . . . a major problem during last month's riots.

## Schools give inadequate preparation for work, young people claim

OECD

Hilary Wilce on an international survey of teenage attitudes.

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Ms Rosie Fietli, VSO field director of programmes in Sri Lanka, organized the messenger service as part of general relief work, undertaken under the direction of the charity organization, Save the Children, and its Norwegian equivalent, Redd Barna.

The authorities in Colombo granted Ms Fietli a pass, which allowed her to move freely during the curfew imposed by the Government, after the

violence against the Tamils broke out on July 23.

The pass was valid for passengers she carried in the VSO minibus.

She contacted relief organizations after she and 12 other VSO workers, who were staying at her house bordering on the shanty-town Borelin district of Colombo, had discussed how best to help.

Three VSO English teachers had arrived at her house, after leaving their posts at provincial teacher-training colleges at the height of the troubles.

Mr John Palmer, programme management officer responsible for Sri Lanka at VSO's London headquarters, was in daily contact with Ms Fietli.

"Rosie and the teachers organized a reference form, so that they could list the names, addresses and telephone numbers of refugees' relatives in the north and outside of the country," he said.

"The volunteers did the best they could to send on simple messages by letter and by phone from the VSO offices, when they could get through."

The volunteers also helped relief organizations to distribute food and other essential items.

VSO has a total of 35 field workers and teachers in Sri Lanka, involved in English language, technical training, community development and agricultural teaching and advisory projects.

Mr Palmer said all the volunteers were safe and some had returned to their teaching posts.

"We are going ahead as planned with our projects, despite the troubles."

"But we are constantly monitoring the situation and will take appropriate action if violence erupts again," he said.

One VSO EFL teacher, Mr David Hayes, from Norwich, witnessed scenes of devastation in the central provinces as he travelled by bus to Colombo to catch a plane home.

"From Marale, about 20 miles north of Kandy, I saw village after village with smoke still rising from burnt out houses, cars, lorries, huts - literally anything belonging to Tamils had been destroyed."

Mr Hayes, employed on an "English for special purposes" project at the Junior Technical College in Anuradhapura since August 1982, travelled to Colombo with Ms Sabine Gupta, from Bristol, who held an English teaching post at Kandy Polytechnic. Her brother, Ernest, who was staying with her on holiday, travelled with them.

Mr Hayes and Mr Gupta became embroiled in the confusion after riots in the Petta market area of Colombo on July 29, while waiting to meet Ms

Gupta at Fort Railway Station, opposite the market.

"We heard shooting, then a mob rushed from the market towards the railway station to shelter from the Army."

"We were outside the station watching. After three minutes or so, the Army arrived on the scene and ordered everyone into the station."

They later read press reports to the effect that an Army patrol had been bombed. The Army shot several civilians in retaliation. The day before, a Sinhalese mob burnt nine Tamils to death on the tracks of the same station.

Weeks of sporadic violence and unrest in Sri Lankan universities - which went largely unreported in the British press - preceded the recent riots.

Tamil students fled from the University of Peradeniya in Kandy at the beginning of June, after Sinhalese students attempted to round them up and force them to deface notices in the Tamil language, in revenge for similar attacks carried out by Tamils on notices in Sinhalese and English.

Inter-racial disturbances at the medical school in Colombo also led to the evacuation of Tamil students in mid-June.

The conflicts over language were partly rooted in measures adopted by the Government in January, when President Jayewardene announced that the country would adopt English alongside Sinhalese as a national language.

The upgrading of English was designed to equip students with a world language and - ironically - to provide a language link between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils.

The Sinhalese have traditionally resented the privileged position of Tamils, who the British favoured as administrators before independence in 1948.

Fluency in English was regarded - even after independence - as a passport to a well-paid job in public employment. The Tamils generally had a better command of the language because of their relationship with the British.

Mrs Bandaranaike, former President of Sri Lanka, did away with English as an official language in 1956, in a bid to encourage Sinhalese to take up jobs in public employment.

But, in the 1960s and 1970s, it became evident that the policy had failed. Successive governments began to recognize that the Sinhalese needed English to participate fully in the expansion of international trading relationships that the country had enjoyed in recent years.

Stuart Little is editor of the EFL Gazette.

Sweden

Christopher Mosey on the approaching crisis of falling rolls.

The teaching profession in Sweden, already badly hit by public spending cuts, is facing its worst crisis in modern times as a result of the nation's declining birthrate.

This year the Central Bureau of Statistics predicts a fall in the 8.5 million population - the start of a trend which the experts say is likely to continue well into the next decade.

One immediate effect is that by 1988 there will be 100,000 fewer children entering primary school. As a result, 10,000 primary school teaching positions will become vacant.

Sweden's teaching unions, greatly alarmed, have demanded that the primary schools be allowed to keep their present allocation of the national school budget, emphasizing that this would make it possible to increase the teacher-pupil ratio and improve the quality of primary education.

An estimated 120 million kronor in teaching salaries will be saved by

## Sacrifice to family planning

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LETTERS

# Wider in-service courses needed on the value of art galleries

Sir - With reference to Frances Spalding's article, "Learning to see" (TES, August 12), only a passing mention was made of the teacher's role in art gallery-based educational activity, and no reference made to the need for more widespread in-service teacher education in this area.

The success of art gallery workshops with schoolchildren does, obviously, very largely depend on the attitudes and involvement of teachers, and yet gaps in communication which still exist between gallery staff and schoolteachers, are not always being tackled as fundamentally as they might be. (An extensive survey conducted by Helen Luckett, keeper of education at Southampton Art Gallery, to be published in the new year in a special educational edition of *Bulletin* - the journal of the Art Galleries Association - will provide a more accurate picture of the educational provision of art galleries in this country).

The real value of educational activity in the art gallery lies in the teacher's ability to follow up the experience in the classroom and to utilize the children's responses on future visits, identifying areas of focus for investigation and where appropriate

for curriculum development. While effective and sustained liaison between the gallery and the school is an essential factor in achieving this, it does not necessarily lead to a reciprocal awareness of the situation.

Gaps of understanding on the part of adults concerned are clearly very much to do with a lack of experience on both sides, and considerable advantages could be gained if art gallery educationists and teachers were able, on an observational level at least, to swap roles for agreed periods. As a positive step forward, many galleries have already been appointing experienced teachers to their full-time staff.

A recent DES short course at West Midlands College - "Art appreciation and the educational use of art galleries and museums" - was based on an overview of teachers' needs in this area, aiming to equip them with some of the experience and expertise necessary in carrying their teaching effectively beyond the classroom, and in relating classroom projects to art and design field experience.

What teachers on such retraining courses need most of all, however, is a new stimulus, and the kind of respect and professional support which unfortunately is still lacking for them in some educational resource areas.

CATHERINE FIELDING  
School of Teacher Education  
West Midlands College of Higher Education  
Walsall

## More appreciation

Sir - With reference to Frances Spalding's article, "Learning to see" (TES, August 12), I am sure that those of us who teach in schools away from progressive art galleries, and who have enormous problems in finding a good range of direct influences for our pupils.

May I suggest the following points for consideration?

- Within galleries, the education officers might well like to hang a "synopsis" collection of paintings, from the permanent, or special, exhibition, in a room where noise is tolerated (the selection of the Courtauld Institute's impressionist collection, hung in that small room in the National was a prime example of a "synopsis").
- The useful experiments, and results, of the progressive galleries might be collated, and circulated, to all galleries and learning centres.
- Pat van Pelt, working through the AAs Council, might encourage the regional arts councils to send out their visual arts education officers, with loan material, into schools (this would be on par with the successful regional work in performing arts specialists coming to schools).
- The Arts Council should bring back the excellent small touring exhibitions suitable for school foyers.
- A study should be made of the art appreciation/history syllabuses from the various examination boards, to see the wide range and needs for students, and to try to meet those needs (try the Joint Matriculation Board's "Study of the Visual Arts" to see the marvellous opportunities for education support).

Then maybe we could enforce Matisse's creative operation and double our efforts to develop art appreciation.

NICK JOHNSON  
Teacher of art history  
John Kyrle High School  
Ross-on-Wye  
Herefordshire

## Poly action

Sir - On August 5, you carried a brief abstract of an HMI report on the engineering department at Bristol Polytechnic.

I should first point out that although the report has only just been published, the visit actually took place in the autumn of 1981. This is not the place for a detailed response to the report, although the polytechnic will shortly be making one, but I should like to pick up just two items as an illustration of the sort of points the polytechnic will sort to make.

First, the report criticizes the provision of equipment for the department but omits to mention that it was HMFs themselves who refused to sanction expenditure on capital equipment and so blocked its purchase. Second, on quite a different tack the report says that the polytechnic is doing higher technician work which "could be done

in other Avon colleges". However, given that much of the expensive laboratory equipment needed for such courses is also required for students on engineering degree courses, this criticism of the polytechnic is, to say the very least, open for debate.

Perhaps more importantly, we have made considerable changes since the visit. Management responsibilities within the department have been reorganized and the introduction by the local authority of an early retirement policy has enabled older staff to retire. The problem of the "poor environment" in which the department had been working has been resolved.

Plans to move the engineering department to the main Frenchay campus were caught up in one of the many "freezes" on capital building projects, but permission has now been given by the DES to build the first phase of a

new engineering department building at Frenchay. Indeed, some of the department's students will be housed there from this September.

There is no doubt that the previous environment has affected the recruitment of both staff and students and that the move which will bring the engineering department into close proximity with the departments of science and computer studies and mathematics, as well as providing first class new facilities, will have a considerable impact on the development of engineering at Bristol. You will see therefore that, even though it took as long for the HMI report to filter through, time has not been wasted at Bristol Polytechnic.

C T CUFFLEY  
Assistant Director (Academic)  
Bristol Polytechnic  
Coldharbour Lane  
Frenchay

## Good interviews

Sir - I think that the idea of "pupil interviews" (TES, Talkback, August 5), is an excellent one. However, in view of the recent controversy over the writing of reports and the possible introduction of lengthy pupil profiles I feel that the "pupil interview" could be profitably expanded.

I feel that the pupil should be brought more into the writing of his or her own report by way of a certain amount of self-monitoring, plus a short pupil interview. I would envisage a teacher asking each pupil in the class to leave the first two or three pages of exercise books blank. These pages would then be used, as the term progressed, by the pupil to record the marks for each piece of work, (the teacher would naturally keep a record in the normal way as well). The marks could be kept in both tabular and graphical form.

In this way, the pupil would always be confronted with his or her progress

(or regress) as it occurred throughout the term in an instantly accessible form. I would hope that this would be as a stimulant to harder work during the term, as well as aiding in the drawing up of reports.

This brings me on to the pupil interview stage. In the two or three weeks leading up to the writing of reports, the teacher could interview each child in the class (probably during lesson time while setting the class a general task to be getting on with). The child's own record of marks would form the basis of a discussion as to what should go down on the pupil's report file could even be written down there and then in front of the pupil. This report could be seen more as an interview between pupil and teacher, rather than just another "standard" teacher comment.

ANDREW S HAYATT  
8 Ashlands Road  
Harfield  
Stoke-on-Trent  
Staffs

## Held back

Sir - I write with reference to your front-page article, "Continuing fall in number of women who become heads" (TES, July 29). I hope that the Women's National Commission is able to persuade Sir Keith Joseph to do something about this, but I am sure that changing the attitudes of school panels is an almost impossible task, so much prejudice against women on their part is unconscious and unrecognized, the fruit of centuries of conditioning, and is often lively denied when the question is raised.

It is very difficult to prove discrimination in sexual grounds in an industrial tribunal, even with the able help and backing of the Equal Opportunities Commission, as I know from personal experience. No matter how able and well-qualified a candidate is, there is always some pseudo-valued reason to reject him or her for a headship.

One factor which I think could be changed with advantage all round is the present policy of awarding headships to very young candidates. I would argue that a 10-year stint as headship probably sees a candidate's best efforts expended, and all too often the remaining 10 to 20 years of service is spent marking time while the school stagnates.

The age of 45 is early enough for a headship; if Mrs Thatcher is in mid-fifties can cope with the stress of being Prime Minister, an energetic and enthusiastic 50-year-old is able to take on a headship.

Many of us who have reared a family do not really get back into the promotion race until our late thirties, and by then there are several things on the ladder to climb before getting near the top.

HILDA MOORHOUSE  
2 Grove Crescent  
Adlington  
Chorley  
Lancs

## On guard ...

Sir - Asgerinder (TES, August 5) writes of "a child counselling about seashore fauna" only to be "quickly silenced by a companion: 'Shh! ... or we'll have to write about it tonight'".

It is not only children who have to be on their guard against such opportunistic manipulation of their enthusiasms. I know of a school not a thousand miles from where I live and

touch, in which even senior staff are becoming increasingly wary about voicing the most tentative of ideas lest they be promptly asked either to prepare a paper or to convene a study-group. Out of the mouths of babes ...

MICHAEL J SMITH  
15 Gilden Hind Park  
Dibden Purdie  
Southampton

## Advice sought

Sir - The letters (TES, August 12) attacking agony aunts in general, and Angela Willans in particular, have missed the point. The reason agony aunts have become so influential is the enormous demand for information, advice and help about emotional and sexual problems, which more conventional agencies (family, church, and health services) have been unable to provide.

In Family Planning Association courses on personal relationships and sexuality, for teachers, social workers, nurses and doctors, we find that these groups do not feel competent or confident enough in dealing with the emotional and sexual problems they encounter.

The need for more training in inter-personal skills, particularly in the medical professions, is now widely recognized. In the meantime let us not attack the agony aunts who are responding to the widespread need for help, and responding with informed advice.

JOYCE ROSSER  
Deputy director  
Education Unit  
Family Planning Association  
27-35 Mortimer Street  
London W1

Letters for publication should be kept as brief as possible and typed on one side of the paper only. The Editor reserves the right to cut or amend them.



# Punish by numbers

DAVID KIBBLE

As societies in miniature schools mirror their larger counterparts by encouraging certain types of behaviour and by having sanctions to be used against those who fail to conform to certain standards.

With the probable demise of corporal punishment we need more than ever to have at our fingertips a range of punitive measures to use in schools. As one whose job at present involves dealing with disciplinary measures I set my mind to devise as wide a range of punishments as I could.

I used ideas from the British judicial system and also from the armed services, including that of allocating each punishment a number. This allocation of numbers to specific punishments makes for easy record keeping: one can record pupils' punishments on card index cards. Indeed, with more serious offences I formally record it on a pupil's card in their presence, often to great effect.

At present the numbered punishments are: 1 Referral to the local education authority panel who consider whether the pupil should continue his education elsewhere (normally an exclusion or reporting centre); 2 Suspension;

the nature of this particular punishment at the beginning of the fifth year and use it only for repeated, serious offences. I regard it as one of the worst punishments I can give. Given in a quiet, formal way it can prove very effective: one of my present recalcitrant fifth-formers left my office complaining that I should not be able to do that sort of thing. The less it is used the more effective it becomes.

The other numbered punishments are:

- 4 Withdrawal from lessons;
- 5 Informing parents either by telephone or by letter;
- 6 Cancelling a pupil's status as a prefect;
- 7 Daily report (in addition to this, where a pupil has a report signed by subject tutors each lesson and brings it to me at the end of each day, we also have 7A where a pupil reports to me three times in the day; any poor report automatically results in immediate detention);
- 8 Detention;
- 9 Withdrawal at break and lunchtime;
- 10 Repairs (graffiti, etc.);
- 11 Work at home;
- 12 Reasons in writing;
- 13 Suspended report.

Punishment number 12 is another culled from the services: in school I use it only with fifth form prefects.

At present the numbered punishments are: 1 Referral to the local education authority panel who consider whether the pupil should continue his education elsewhere (normally an exclusion or reporting centre); 2 Suspension;

3 A severe reprimand. This is one whose origin is with the services. It involves, after "trying" the case, the reading out of a text from a card as follows: "As your head of house I now issue you with a severe reprimand for (name of offence). This will be entered on your record and I reserve the right to mention both the reprimand and the offence on any report or reference required for you. Do you understand the nature of this punishment?"

I use this punishment only with the fifth form and will award it only once to any one pupil. I explain to the form

They are required to submit a short written report on a misdemeanour; it is not used for major offences and on being given the punishment a second or subsequent time they can lose their status as a prefect.

Number 13 derives from our judicial system: a pupil's name is placed on a list in the staff room for a fortnight; one complaint about a pupil's behaviour or work in lessons means that he goes immediately on to punishment 7, full report.

The advantage of such a varied system of varied punishments is that there are a number of punishments "at the lower end" that can be used to check progression any further. Much of the value derives from their symbolic nature - they show that the matter has been brought before a head of house, that he has taken action and that the school disapproves.

Some schools have possibly placed too much weight on the detention system, which can become overcrowded and therefore lose its value and effectiveness. I can almost be come a reward. I offer my ideas outlined above in the hope that it may spark off further ideas: for one would be delighted to hear of such.

David Kibble is acting head of house at Lamswood School, Leeds.



# Sensitive issues

MICHAEL FARRELL

Visiting speakers were the main ingredient of an unusual English and liberal studies course at Red Hill School, Kent, a special school catering for adolescent boys of above average intelligence with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The course group comprised 15 young men aged 16 to 17 years who were allowed to suggest speakers and topics. At first, the boys seemed suspicious of their freedom to choose but soon requests for speakers began to flow.

Over the year we entertained a wide range of guests, from a Jesuit priest to a self-made businessman, from a marathon runner to a forensic scientist. A Member of Parliament, a psychiatrist, a gunsmith and an authority on race relations were among the many others who contributed.

Sessions lasted 70 minutes and we asked speakers to spend about 20 minutes on the talk (or demonstration or film) to allow plenty of time for questions.

Pupils were encouraged to pursue their interests. They would often approach the speaker, after sessions, for addresses or literature or to request an outside visit.

The educational benefits of the course were considerable. The young men gained authoritative factual information and informed opinion on a vast span of topics. They developed their vocabulary, employing new words with initial embarrassment and deference but with subsequent confidence.

Skills in questioning were honed. Our teenagers were soon able to avoid being thrown off by a response like: "What an interesting point. But let me try to clarify it by putting it another way."

Speakers usually enjoyed the rigour

and penetration of the interrogations. Group members became increasingly able to seize upon essentials in the preliminary talk and developed sound debating skills.

All the speakers were briefed about the handicap for which the school provided. They were asked to be particularly sensitive to apparently objective questions that might conceal strong personal elements.

Within this context, pupils used visitors in various ways to fulfil emotional needs. Of the many examples that could be given, the case of Nicholas is typical.

This bright 17-year-old wanted to join the police force like his father. But he had been cautioned for committing a couple of minor thefts.

With our police visitor, he expressed anger and suspicion towards the constabulary. The speaker responded sensitively and sensitively. Nicholas then progressed to cautious questioning. What were his chances of joining the force having been in "a bit of bother"?

The response was frank and accurate. He would have to hold down another job, without getting into further trouble, for three or four years before he would stand a chance.

All this highlighted the boy's ambivalence towards his father and his rejection of his father's values by stealing. It illuminated Nicholas's self imposed "double bind", unrealistically desiring to join the police immediately on leaving school.

In confronting our visitor in a way he was probably unable to do with his own father, Nicholas began to unravel his confusion. He found, emotionally and objectively, a good compromise.

At the end of the year, the course received the unanimous appreciation of the pupils. Numerous (sometimes surprised) letters of thanks from speakers accumulated.

Apart from the important educational and emotional threads of the programme, such accolades formed a fitting stamp of approval for our rather unorthodox approach.

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# Super sixth

MALCOLM JOHNSTON  
TIM KOOM  
AND MARY TICHEHURST

A good deal has been written about the subsidised movement of pupils from maintained to fee-paying schools. Less about the increasing number of sixth-formers who transfer from private education. We thought it would be interesting to look more closely at the reasons behind their decision, and the opinions of students who have experienced the change. At Broadcote Sixth Form Centre, 30 such students responded to a questionnaire.

Before they came to Broadcote 24 of the 30 students were at single-sex schools; 10 boarded, 10 were day pupils at boarding-schools, 10 were at day schools; 23 students felt that they had had no social life outside school; 10 students had felt that they belonged to an "elite" when at school premises.

"It was a very safe place. Everybody knew each other," said one. "At my old school every part of your day was geared to passing an ultimate exam. If you didn't work you just got totally bored because there wasn't anything else to do."

In the case of 12 students, the former school either had no sixth form or was closing; nine were a consideration for nine; the cost and time of travel to and from school affected nine (10 students travelled approximately 25 miles each way and 14 experienced an approximately 10 hour school day door-to-door); 16 students took the decision alone, nine shared it with parents; for 24 students the end of the fifth year seemed a natural break; 18 had friends also leaving the former school; 21 already knew students at the sixth form centre and 16 transferred with friends.

The smallness of their former

school and the security and sense of belonging this afforded appealed to half these students; 10 had liked the sense of discipline/control; for eight, extra-curricular activities had been better; 11 students had been glad to leave the strictness/pettness of the former school; eight had disliked the lack of freedom. At Broadcote, 11 students liked the friendliness, eight the sense of individual responsibility, six the opportunity to meet new people. Comments included:

"An independent school provides much more incentive to work because one is pressured to do so. Also the high fees make one feel guilty about not doing so. In addition, there is incentive to work so as to keep ahead of one's friends."

"Although the final decision about studying is up to the individual, many don't try hard enough unless they are pushed."

"At my last school I felt I had to work hard because my parents kept on saying how disappointed they would be if I failed my O levels. Now I'm at the sixth form I'm working because I want to get on in life and go off to university."

"I feel much more relaxed and enthusiastic. At my old school you were ordered to finish the work. At Broadcote you are asked. Subtle but much nicer."

"In the lessons the atmosphere is more friendly. You can express your views without worrying."

"There is a more informal working environment, with desks arranged in such a way as to make discussion easier. Before, classrooms were regimentally arranged, even for sixth formers, encouraging a dictatorial attitude in teachers and passivity in pupils."

"I like the mixture of O and A level students, with no distinction made or felt."

On academic progress, 12 students felt that they were working better at Broadcote because they are doing it for themselves, not under threat of punishment; 14 were finding it harder to work, for the same reason. Less work was now done at home by 22 students, because they had free periods in school time. Ten students did not expect to achieve

their potential at the sixth form centre, but 13 did.

They commented: "Having been made to work, the freedom of the sixth form has made me relax too much. I think that if I'd gone to another private school I would have done better but not enjoyed myself so much."

"I spend much more of my time socializing, whereas previously during the evening I did nothing but work and watch TV because there was nothing else to do. The free lessons tend to leave you so relaxed that you find it difficult to get back into proper lessons."

"In the first two terms at Broadcote I tended to abuse the freedom but now I work because I want to, not because I have to."

"I feel that at one stage my attitude to work slackened and now I have to tighten up to continue."

"I expect to have the best of me brought out and put to its full use to recognize it myself and play a considerable part, co-operating, to discover and use that potential."

The two extremes of opinion were represented by the following:

"Although commuting to and from school was not easy at times it was well worth it. I go the sixth form to work because I want A levels. I don't go for the fun of it and will leave as soon as possible."

"I like the different types of people, having been with only middle-upper class girls for most of my school life. The staff are more friendly and really seem to care about you as a person whereas in my old school you were, surprisingly enough, a nobody. Coming to the sixth form has, I feel, made me into a better person, because at a private school you tend to feel apart from the real world. It would have been an awful shock going straight from my old school to a job or university. Sixth form seems to soften the blow a bit, cases you into the outside world."

Malcolm Johnston and Tim Koom are students and Mary Tichehurst is head of sixth form at Broadcote School Sixth Form Centre, Weston-super-Mare.

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## FEATURES

# Learning by doing

Down in the hedgerows an interest in biology is stirring. Sara Parker unearths the fieldwork of the Mammal Society's youth group.

The 14-year-old lifted a small, struggling scrap of fur out of a metal trap by the scruff of the neck. "It's a bank vole, female, in breeding condition", he said with the air of a committed expert, before releasing it back into the wild.

As one of a group of youngsters, aged between 13 and 17, on this year's summer camp in Shropshire run by the Youth Group of the Mammal Society, he is a dedicated enthusiast. At home, he has already set live traps made out of pickle jars or milk bottles to record the numbers of small rodents around where he lives - making his own small but rigorous scientific contribution to current research.

On the five-day summer camp at the Field Study Centre in Preston Montford just outside Shrewsbury, he and the other youngsters have the opportunity to study the wildlife around them in even greater depth.

Adrian Bayley, director of the Field Study Centre and a member of the Mammal Society who has helped organize the course, explains: "We want the youngsters to become nature detectives, to go out and observe and write down what they see. We want to heighten their awareness of what is about them, whether they live in the countryside or the town."

Like many of the naturalists, both professional and amateur, involved in the Youth Group of the Mammal Society, he believes schools should do more to encourage youngsters to appreciate the fauna of the British Isles.

"We have a wealth of wild animals living around us which provide a lot of opportunity for study, and yet teachers tend to go for safer options such as dissecting rats," he says, pointing out that although work on mammals is gaining importance in many examination syllabuses, the tendency is to steer away from those found in this country.

Certainly, he admits, there are some problems in studying British mammals. For example, most local education authorities have health and safety regulations which rule out the handling of captured wild animals in the classroom for fear of disease if a pupil should be bitten, while for some mammals, such as bats and shrews, a government licence is needed.

He suggests, however, that there is a wealth of second-hand evidence which can be sought and the summer camp at the centre shows many ways besides live-trapping for the identification and study of the inhabitants of the hedgerows and woodlands.

There are walks looking for animal holes, tracks, droppings, half-eaten food - in fact, anything to indicate the presence of a mammal population, which is mostly hidden from the casual observer.

At night there is badger-watching, and during the day, trips to a river just across the Welsh border to look for otter and to a conifer forest where the threatened red squirrel can still be found.

Time is spent in the laboratory dissecting owl pellets or identifying animal skeletons, and ultimately all this work is brought together in a survey of the mammal population in a 10 kilometre square on the outskirts of a nearby town.

The summer camps are run by the youth group only once a year, but interest is kept alive through quarterly newsletters outlining current research and an annual survey to which schools as well as individuals are asked to contribute.

This year, information on the distribution and habitat of moles has been requested; last year,

the survey was concerned with the identification of animals killed on the roads.

Somewhat promisingly, the 1982 survey received 10,000 reports from more than 100 contributors - double the response of the year before.

The youth group also has nearly 100 members now, although so widely spread that it is impossible to get together more than two or three regional groups for regular meetings.

Schools join the Mammal Society as full members, yet sadly constitute only a small proportion of a membership of more than 1,000.

It is a trend which is perhaps not altogether surprising, since it is only in the last six years that the Mammal Society itself has begun actively to cater for young naturalists.

A registered charity founded in the fifties to bring professional and amateur naturalists together, the society started to recognize the place of such youngsters when a 14-year-old boy

tuned up at one of its annual three-day conferences.

A member who was there remembers: "He had quite a lot of courage turning up on his own when he didn't know anyone and the papers were quite scientific."

Following his initiative, youngsters were invited to a two-day conference in Durham in 1978 and given a day's field work afterwards to "get the feel of studying and observing wild mammals".

This and similar one-day courses were the forerunners of the summer camps, although it was not until last year that the first five-day camp was held on Dartmoor with eight youngsters and four adult volunteers from the Mammal Society.

Michael Woods, chairman of the youth group committee, who organized and helped to run the first camp, explains: "They are the real thing, a chance for proper research. It isn't just playing around."

This year's camp, also run for eight youngsters, is just as serious with the added advantage of access to laboratories and to staff throughout the rest of the year take youngsters on field study courses.

In addition, the youngsters are given an opportunity to benefit from specialist knowledge, the course leader being an expert on moles, and the visiting lecturer an expert on bats.

But in spite of such specialist knowledge, the camp is primarily concerned with demonstrating the practical techniques of wildlife study which can be applied to the youngster's own environment when he goes home.

Michael Woods says: "It is a matter of showing them how to go about observing and recording. They may read books or read papers and think 'how on earth did he do it? We aim to show them how, so they can go and do it'."

And he believes it doesn't matter whether a youngster lives in a rural or urban area, explaining: "A lot of towns and cities have been built up around the animals which live in the area."

"A lot of the time the ordinary person does not see them because they are nocturnal. You have to look for them but they are there, living in council estates, at the bottom of the garden, there may even be a badger set under the shed."

Typical of the kind of youngsters the camp is 15-year-old Nick, who lives in Bristol. For the past two years he has been studying live-trapping small rodents in an area on the edge of his garden.

The results of his 24 traps, which he checked twice a day, are sent off to the British Records Centre, a government agency responsible for publishing distribution maps.

Sometimes friends help him but mostly he isn't interested, and it is a painstaking time-consuming task which he does because of his own enthusiasm and dedication.

A bright and obviously capable boy, Nick is 14 O levels, he has recently changed schools and only now are his teachers aware of his work. He explains: "A lot of people are bothered with this kind of thing. They think they have any opportunity because they live in a city."

For the only girl on the course, however, was a teacher who encouraged her to join through the school's natural history club.

"I don't think I ever thought I could do much in a specialist field. To be honest, I don't think I'd even be on this course if it hadn't been for the school," explains 14-year-old Yvonne, who for the past year has been live-trapping small rodents with other pupils at her school.

A clever girl who joined the youth group months ago, she describes herself as the person who "jumps at opportunities to do things but is not the kind to seek them out."

Yet the Mammal Society policy behind the youth group is to avoid it becoming just a hobby for a few youngsters, and to encourage them to become budding scientists, or at least amateur naturalists.

Teachers like Pam Bowen, a member of the society and volunteer helper on the summer camp, believe, however, that children should come to biology this way. "It is nothing more exciting than seeing what a trap or a tree. They should all start through study and perhaps then there would be some level failures."

Her own teenage son has developed a keen interest in biology, and she says: "He is already interested in it, although he has to market it himself."

For his mother, such an achievement is the result of something which has interested him since childhood. After all, she says, "biology is something around in fields and woods, watching and recording accurately - and then log by doing."

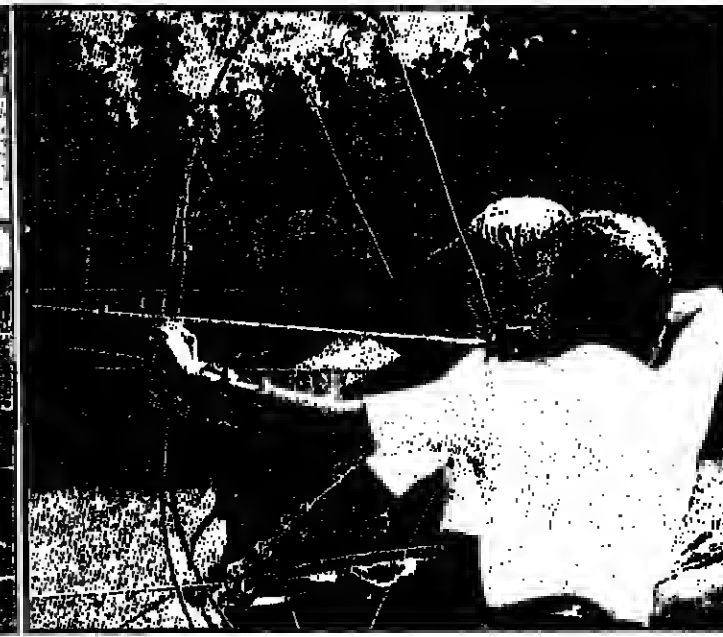
Membership of the youth group is £2 a year. Full membership of the Mammal Society for schools is £10. For more information, send an s.a.e. to The Mammal Society, Harvest House, Reading RG1 5AS.



## FEATURES

# Up-market Butlins

Michael Houser finds one of the most expensive and best equipped schools in the country anxious to make its facilities available to the paying public every summer.



There's one big problem when it comes to thoroughbreds; they're expensive to keep - particularly when they're lying idle. Millfield School, occupying several hundred acres of leafy real estate in central Somerset, currently qualifies as the best illustration of this phenomenon in British education. In keeping with its reputation as Britain's most expensive school, millions of pounds have been ploughed into facilities the like of which would embarrass many universities.

In an effort to make fuller use of its ever expanding collection of high-tech study blocks, all-weather pitches and other highly specialized facilities, Millfield decided to open its doors to the public during the summer holidays back in 1971. In those early days Millfield was the first school to introduce activity holidays - only a handful of unaccompanied local children were catered for. But Millfield's five-week summer activity programme now includes 50 (week-long) courses of kinds (ranging from hot air ballooning, public speaking and linguistics to photography and computing) involving 1,500 to 1,800 "activists" and more than 100 tutors.

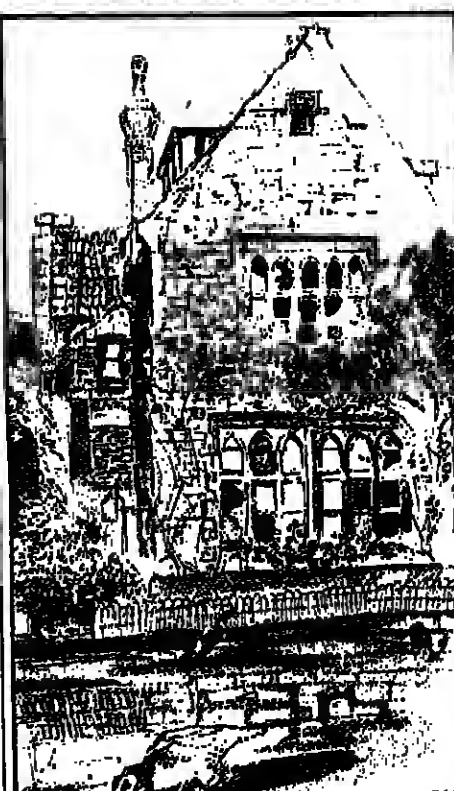
Fewer than a third of the courses are now exclusively for children. The emphasis is very much on families, who make up 60 per cent of the numbers and now days visitors come from as far afield as the Continent and the Far East. Although it was founded in 1935, Millfield has only come into the public reckoning in the past 15 years, thanks largely to its reputation as a sports factory which has turned out more than 200 junior and senior internationals in 24 sports (among the 40 sports offered are polo, land yachting and modern pentathlon). Gareth Edwards and swimmer Duncan Goodhew attended Millfield, and without their OMs, British Davis Cup tennis and Somerset county cricket would be in dire straits.

Thanks to a massive investment programme which he has engineered, Colin Atkinson, the headmaster, is unabashed about calling Millfield's sports and recreational facilities "categorically" the finest in the country: "... and what's more, we have - again categorically - the best science facilities of any school as well".

Millfield's sports facilities occupy the best part of 135 acres, split between three sites. The inventory includes two dozen grass pitches, three sports halls, an indoor riding school, floodlit tennis courts (hardcourt and grass), and three golf areas. In the wake of a £600,000 library and audio-visual complex (which includes a television studio) and a £300,000 chemistry block, a dance studio and fourth sports hall are due to make their appearance in 1984. The buildings and development budget for 1983-84 alone is £1.2m - and this for a school of 1,150 pupils (the staff figure quoted is "somewhere between 165-170").

In addition to an ever lengthening catalogue of summer activity courses (six new courses in 1983, even more for 1984 including fantasy and science-fiction role play games, oriental studies, bird watching and a "computer college" for micro-fanatics), Millfield's programme has expanded to encompass EFL and the handicapped.

Because the school's population includes 50 different nationalities, Millfield has been able to



Millfield: 135 acres of indoor and outdoor facilities for 40 different sports

tap its well-established Foreigners' English Department (to go with the Remedial English Department which attracted a dyslexic catchment area). Residential EFL courses for 8-16 year olds were introduced into the programme in the mid-70s, EFL for adults (half-day courses) was added this year.

Visitors to the school's Holiday Village are accommodated in the mini-stately homes Millfield has scattered all over Somerset. One of these is now used entirely by the Friends of the Young Deaf, who bring 50 hearing impaired youngsters (and their families) for a course designed to increase their self-confidence and communications skills.

Free crèches are available during the day, a babysitting service at night. There is also professional guardian's service and a London coach service available for unaccompanied children arriving from overseas. Millfield has its own bank, surgery and physiotherapy facilities, sports shop and post office.

This year, for the first time, a parental hideaway has been added: Millfield's staff room has been converted into a "club" which doubles as a pub and oasis of adult-only tranquillity. To supplement the regime of three buffet-style meals and afternoon tea (there is no self-catering), wine vouchers have also been introduced. Evening programmes include feature films, aerobics sessions and trips to nearby Wells, Glastonbury... or to local skittles and scrumpy evenings.

One of Millfield's selling points for adults is its location, lying as it does, "twixt the Quantocks and Mendips. Although all children attend both

morning and afternoon courses (two-and-a-half hours each), parents may opt out of either session if they prefer to explore the locality on their own. And Millfield is particularly well equipped to cope with that nemesis of the great British summer - wet weather: a video cassette library of some 2,500 tapes can be screened in special viewing rooms and on receivers in 80 different classrooms by the most elaborate AV department in any British school.

The scope and sophistication of Millfield's activity holiday programme has not of course developed haphazardly. Under the direction of John Davies, who wears another hat as Millfield's director of physical education, an organization known as Millfield School Enterprises Ltd has gradually developed the activity programmes and is now examining the possibility of developing Millfield as a conference centre during other holiday periods when activity holidays are not feasible.

The example has not been lost on others. An Old Millfieldian has established an "a la Millfield" course at Stowe, while Millfield served as a model for rather more specialized activity courses at Marlborough, Tounston and Eton. Sherbourne has opted to turn over its facilities to an outside operator in exchange for profit sharing, an option rejected by John Davies: "We much prefer to retain control of the programme, and of course over our facilities."

Millfield is either very coy or very casual about the precise financial rewards which Millfield School Enterprises Ltd manages to reap. Gross turnover from the holiday village is now in the region of £250,000, and a notional profit figure of £50-90,000 is estimated. Colin Atkinson is adamant, however, that Millfield's prime motivation has been bringing in outsiders to make full-time use of Millfield's facilities - and not to attempt to recoup the millions invested.

"We're doing this because it's right to do it. I really did feel peeved that these kinds of facilities stood idle in schools throughout the country."

"Over the years, we've done more than break even, and although the money has gone into the melting pot to improve our general sport and recreational facilities, it's hardly likely to touch anything to do with the boarding school."

Whatever the motivation, the holiday village is full, and at a time when more commercial competitors are falling on hard times. How does John Davies account for Millfield's popularity? "Lots of outsiders have come along and said, 'surely you're just an upper-class Butlins. I used to resent that deeply - we are, after all, offering some education throughout the day. More and more, are looking for purposeful holidays - perhaps in reaction to traditional sun bathing - and I think we offer a wider programme than anyone in the country. We offer the most tremendous value for money as well, allied to the fact that when people come here, they're staggered by our facilities. It all makes for a better family holiday'."

Further information about Millfield courses from Mrs Carolyn Steer, Applications Secretary, Millfield School, Street, Somerset (tel: 0458 42291 Ext 45).

# A place to rest

Tim Albert savours the comforts of the University Women's Club

The little house in the heart of London's Mayfair has the genteel and slightly fading charm of one of those small private hotels on the south coast. In the gently green carpeted foyer, the modern wood-panelled reception area jars with the genteel armchairs, delicate water colours, William Morris coverlets on the window seat, and the sprinkling of women of comfortable age.

Down the corridor, past a tiny bar at the foot of the staircase, is a simple dining room: 15 tables, each with a water jug. Upstairs, via the tiny lift, are 19 single and five twin bedded rooms, generally rather austere. On the first floor, however, is an elegant drawing room with grand piano and colour TV and a small colonnaded library apparently modelled on that in the Travellers' Club.

This is the University Women's Club where, some monogrammed towel's throw from the Dorchester (165 basic for a single room) the 2,000 odd members can have a full lunch for under a fiver, or bed and breakfast for £16.91 all in.

The club was founded in 1866, and since 1921 has occupied these premises at 2 Audley Square, former home of a branch of the Duke of Bedford's family and said to be Dorothy Sayers's model for Lord Peter Wimsey's house. It is not so much a feminine (nor feminist) tipstope to the gentlemen's clubs of Pall Mall, but a much less formal affair in the tradition of those pioneers of women's education whose stern portraits adorn the dining room.

"It's marvellous to have such a quiet haven, particularly when you have been to a rather hurly-burly meeting or have been shopping or to an exhibition," says Miss Joan Fring, history graduate from the University of Cambridge, one of the British Standards Institution, and now joint honorary treasurer of the Club. "To be able to come here and have tea is so restful and recuperative."

Accommodation and catering make up a large part of the club, but there is also a programme of events such as Christmas and tea parties and lectures from, for example, the director of Sadlers Wells and the author of a dictionary of fairy animals. A music society holds recitals in the drawing room.

Like many other clubs in London, it has run into financial problems in recent years, and operating losses have forced the committee to raise the subscription from £23 to more than £50. The number of members, which had grown steadily from 1500 to 2500 over the past ten years, fell back by about 500.

Mrs Eve Becher, graduate of the University of Melbourne, is the Club's present chairman ("I stick to the word chairman, it's so much easier to say"), and she says that they are now embarking on a programme of improvements which will make the club less Victorian and more appealing to younger members. The catering has been reorganised, and there are plans to convert part of the premises into a less formal wine bar/buttry.

The club is also anxious to recruit more members. All women graduates are eligible and those under 25 pay half fees. Undergraduates in their penultimate term may join as temporary members without payment, which could be useful for those trying to find work in the city. Non graduates may become associate members.

"These are pleasant surroundings if you have to spend a night or more in London," says Mrs Becher. "It's somewhere to entertain friends, somewhere to hold a party. You can make friends with like-minded women or have peace and seclusion if that is your wish. We have so many mixed groups, and members of all ages: we are not at all institutional nor anachronistic."





## REVIEW

## The Irish Fact

Timothy O'Keeffe on studies of Joyce, Yeats and their literary progeny



A Colder Eye: The Modern Irish Writers. By Hugh Kenner. Allen Lane £14.95. 0 7139 1595 1. Modern Irish Short Stories. Edited by Ben Fokner. Futura £4.95. 0 7088 2303 3. The Heat of the Sun. By Sean O'Faolain. Penguin £3.25. 0 1400 5722 6.

Hugh Kenner's early critical writings, though textually exact and searching, suffered from appearing to call as much attention to the brilliance of the critic as to the originality of his chosen authors. His later work is, blessedly, more relaxed. In the past, for example, he might have made much heavier weather of his observation that W B Yeats "borrowed" from the prosody of Abraham Cowley ("of all poets") with brilliant success; here it is a passing felicity only. One breathes more easily as a result.

Professor Kenner's subject in *The Modern Irish Writers*, principally Yeats and Joyce, with forays into the territories of John Millington Synge, Sean O'Casey, Samuel Beckett, Brian O'Nolan ("Flann O'Brien" *et al.*), Patrick Kavanagh and so on. He says, "It is not true that what I do not discuss I dismiss". In accounting for not writing at length of Thomas Kinsella, John Montague, Seamus

Heaney, George Moore, James Stephens, Lady Gregory, the last three far being "part of a different story", while the first three are "a new story entirely, the story of post-Yeatsian Ireland". One writer, not mentioned in the index, both praised and denigrated by Yeats, and living today at the age of 81 to be very much a part of "a new story" is Francis Stuart. For shame!

Professor Kenner gives a preliminary warning about the snares sometimes involved in what he calls the Irish Fact. What may have been passed down as Gospel Truth can sometimes be revealed as invention, mystification, falsification committed by Irish people commonly with the intention to impress, baffle or lead astray foreign (mostly American) researchers into arcane literary matters. The late Brian O'Nolan was one of the past masters of the art. One trusts that Kenner is not unduly gleeful in pointing out a few minor errors in Richard Ellmann's large biography of Joyce: it may be remembered that he drew attention to such errors in a TLS correspondence earlier this year. Rivalry in Joycean matters knows no bounds.

Both Yeats and Joyce were masters of malice, among other things. Joyce's portrait of the young Oliver St John Gogarty as Buck Mulligan in *Ulysses* must have poisoned the rest of his life (towards its end, in a New York bar, he began telling one of his well-smoothed anecdotes about the great figures he had known in Dublin earlier in the century when his words were drowned by great blasts from the juke box: Joyce might have foreseen that kind of fate for him). Yeats tended to the Olympian, though he had sharp claws as well. Kenner quotes him on the novelist, George Moore, who "said to a friend: 'How do you keep your punts from tugging about your knees?' 'O', said the friend, 'I put my braces through the little tapes that are sewn there for the purpose'. A few days later he thanked the friend with emotion." Ah well...

Patrick Kavanagh suppressed a poem about Yeats, which ends:

Yes, Yeats, it was damn easy for you

By the middle classes and the Big Houses

To talk about the sixty-year old public

Man sheltered by the dim Victorian

Muses.

Readers of Joyce's letters (among other things, too, he must be ranked as literature's great knickers fetishist, just as Jean Genet

ranks as the connoisseur of policemen's mine-scented serge crêches) soon realize that there was nothing "dim" or "Victorian" about him. It was a merciless life but a heroic and eventually, I think, a most moving one. Anyway he turned it into a myth which even the detractors of someone like Brian O'Nolan has not yet destroyed.

I do not think that Professor Kenner has quite come to terms yet with Brian O'Nolan, master of endless pseudonyms, of which Flann O'Brien and Myles na Gopaleen (later "na Gopaleen") are the most famous. *At Swim- two-Birds* and *The Third Policeman* are comic masterpieces, underpinned though they are by dark broodings and speculations. His Irish novel, *An Béal Bocht*, translated as *The Poor Mouth*, is the blackest of all Green fiction. Kenner underestimates *The Hard Life* - the author considered it to be a study of Dublin dialect but it is far more than that. In my experience he is the writer whose prose, besides that of Evelyn Waugh, has insinuated itself into more tongues than any other of the last, say, 40 years: people can actually quote him, and take delight in doing so. Can one quite a line from Norman Mailer, John Fowles...

Professor Kenner has a chapter about Irish and his inability so far to learn the language. Here is what Brian O'Nolan wrote on that subject (he was a native speaker): "True Irish prose has a stately latinistic line that does not exist in the fragmented English patois". He goes on to quote his own literal translation of a ferocious and restrained letter by one seventeenth-century Irish captain to another and comments "That seems to me to be an exceptional achievement in the sphere of written nastiness and the original exudes the charm attaching to all instances of complete precision in the use of words". If Joyce had rejected all forms of Irish nationalism, language included, what steepest latinity might he not have brought to it?

Professor Kenner makes much of Joyce's instancing of the difference between England and Ireland when Stephen Dedalus in the *Portrait of the Artist* wonders how differently the English words Home, Christ, Ate, Master echo in the Irish mind. Patrick Kavanagh angrily denounced the enforced teaching of Irish in schools, though he conceded that children should acquire an understanding of the (often beautiful) meanings of place names. He himself, at one time dismissed as the "peasant poet", came from Mucker, "place



of pigs". He bore his fate with equanimity. Meeting him was like meeting a force of nature and he (wrongly perhaps) became a potent figure to many of the disaffected but talented younger generation of poets, struggling also to find their way beyond Yeats. Heaney has written of his liberating influence though John Montague thought his own generation had been liberated into ignorance, a remark I think he came to regret.

Published at the same time as Kenner's studies and truffle-huntings among the living and dead of Irish writers are two volumes of reprinted short stories. Ben Fokner's *Modern Irish Short Stories*, a good anthology. When I saw that Anthony Burgess had contributed a Preface I wondered what he would first use the "I". Since he is terribly fond of it, it occurs here on the fourth line. Penguin are producing the *Collected Stories of Sean O'Faolain*, of which *The Heat of the Sun* is the second of three volumes. Professor Kenner does not have much time for him as for his contemporary, Frank O'Connor, whom Mr Kavanagh wrote: "How often I read I wish that the author could have thrown in a few squawks of the earth's healthy reality - muck, stones, worms, dung. In the patch intelligence could grow." That is the criticism that really matters, that of the fellow artist.

## A debunking oeuvre

Aina Taylor on an erudite Italian fabulist



Moral Tales. By Giacomo Leopardi. Translated by Patrick Creagh. Carcanet £9.95. 0 85635 420 1.

The jacket of this book claims that "Leopardi is Italy's greatest writer after Dante". Maybe, I confess that I admire the courage to pronounce so boldly, consigning Petrarch and the many towering literary figures of the intervening years to an indeterminate, nebulous limbo. But I do agree where erudition is concerned.

Giacomo Leopardi was born in Recanati in

1798 to a family of impoverished provincial aristocrats. His father, Manaldo, also a man of letters, suffered from the kind of reactionary fanaticism which unhappily animates so many politicians to this day. Anxious to spend most of his time in the pursuit of his studies, he was happy to leave the management of his household to his autocratic and bigoted wife. The education of Giacomo and his siblings, Carlo and Paolina, was entrusted to a private tutor of no great distinction, who was unable to cater to Leopardi's voracious intellectual appetite. From an extremely early age, then, taking advantage of his father's heterogeneous library, the boy taught himself English, German, Spanish, Greek, Hebrew, philosophy, philology, archaeology and astronomy, complementing the Latin and French lessons considered at the time normal and adequate fare for a young gentleman. Endowed with exceptional intelligence and retentive memory, in the space of a few years Leopardi had become one of the most learned men in Europe.

For a proper appreciation of his work, however, it is important to bear in mind the stifling, illiberal atmosphere of his parental home, the mood that informed Italy at that peculiar time in her history, the fragility of his health and the deformity which disfigured him, precluding time and again the emotional fulfilment for which he yearned. All these factors are central to his writing.

Recanati, now in the Marche, was then in the Papal States, a region where every form of artistic expression must conform to the strictest political conservatism. Leopardi, a radical and not conventionally religious, couldn't wait to break free from the cocoon and enjoy the stimulus provided by intercourse with fellow writers. But frequent illness and total lack of financial resources made it impossible for him to leave home before his twenty-fourth year, and even then he never got beyond Naples, Rome, Bologna, Milan, Florence and Pisa, unlike most of his more fortunate contemporaries. Leopardi is best known as a poet, but the controversy begun by his illustrious friend, De Sanctis, and later taken up by innumerable critics, as to whether he is a philosopher, philologist and grammarian, or artist, has not yet come to rest.

Having written his "idylls" and *canzoni*, and tirelessly recorded both thoughts and feelings in his *Zibaldone*, Leopardi began to turn over in his mind the form he intended to give to the *Operette morali*. He wanted to compose, as he wrote to his admiring friend Giordani, "dialogues in the manner of Lucian... short comedies or comedy scenes". His satirical prose, evolved out of his knowledge of Greek and the numerous modern languages he knew, would serve as a novel tool for introducing clarity of style and originality of judgment to Italy at a time of petulant purism and turgid romanticism. Irked by the Absolutists' conviction that man is perfectible and must ultimately achieve happiness, either in this life or the supposed next, and that technological progress will ensure future delights (such as the threat of nuclear war, for example), Leopardi set about his debunking oeuvre with scientific lucidity.

*The Operette*, written at different times and fully inter published in one volume, do not succeed one another logically, but rather reflect the author's mood at the time each was conceived. Although De Sanctis's criticism (neither properly understood nor admitted) *Operette* is still held to represent the most sound foundation for later thought, twentieth-century criticism, with the exception of Croce, perceives more or less unanimously that *Operette* as a work in which art, music and rhythm prevail over philology and philosophy, a work in which literary language must be enjoyed without prejudice. Manzoni, whose writing was so different, acclaimed it as one of the best examples of contemporary prose.

Patrick Creagh has produced an imaginative and accomplished translation, intelligently faithful to Leopardi's idiosyncratic phraseology and punctuation, and garnished with an extensive introduction and notes. The book is elegantly designed and printed, with the exception of a startling isochronism on page 11, where 1892, instead of 1829, precipitates a frail poet, who died young, into decrepitude. This is the first of a five volume edition of the *Zibaldone*, and *Epistolario* as well as some of the minor works.

One wonders why the less known *Operette* was chosen to begin the series. According to De Sanctis, critic and friend, Leopardi is a philosopher poet, and must be studied first in his prose, where his philosophy is simply manifested. This criterion may have governed the choice. But he that as it may, one looks forward with anticipation to an understanding of scholarly excellence which will give pleasure to mentors and pupils alike.

## Fickle figures

Finlay J Macdonald on the approach of yet more radio trash

For the last couple of weeks "Reithian principles" have been milled over in the BBC's corridors of middle power by men and women who had not even been born when the architect of public service broadcasting began his lingering farewell to Portland Place in 1938. It's nothing new. The "Reithian principles" are taken off the high shelves and dusted every time change threatens Radio 4 UK as it is called to distinguish it from its country stepsons, Radio Scotland and Radio Wales.

Five months ago it was Richard Francis, the Managing Director of Radio, who caused a stir when he suggested giving Radio 4 a new image as a news and current affairs channel. The idea was courageously challenged in public by Monica Sims who was then nearing the end of her distinguished stint as Radio 4's Controller. The Francis plan was quietly dropped. But no sooner had Monica Sims moved on to become Director of Programmes than her successor, David Hatch, floated a new scheme to boost Radio 4's listening figures which have suffered, inevitably, from the onslaught of the two breakfast television programmes. It is the Hatch "discussion document" which is currently furrowing brows at BBC headquarters and being given the Reithian litmus test by those who remember how to administer it.

Anyone attempting to change an established broadcasting channel will do so in the light of his own predilections and experiences. Richard Francis is an eminent current affairs man; he came to his present post from that of BBC's Director of News and Current Affairs. It was natural that he should see regular injections of news as a tonic for a tired channel. Hatch is differently influenced. He came from Radio 2 which has been having its nose bloodied by LBC's brash, Americanized, rolling magazine format that gets the morning adrenalin pumping with a super-charged concoction of national news, local traffic news, personality interviews and quickfire wisdom on almost anything. This seems to be the basis of the formula which David Hatch envisages as a means of raising Radio 4 from the slough of despond into which it descends between 8.30am and midday.

The *Today* programme achieves a peak of between one million and one

and a half million listeners about 8am and thereafter the audience dwindles to 300,000 till midday when the revamped *Yon and Yours* boosts it to 750,000. It surges over the million mark again for *The World at One*, and at 2 o'clock 600,000 loyal adherents settle down to the unfailingly excellent *Woman's Hour*. Meantime, on the other side of the broadcasting world, the whole perplexity of popular channels (BBC and commercial) manage to hold sizable audiences during Radio 4's late morning doldrums although they all suffer a dip after breakfast.

Almost any projected solution can be justified from that kind of audience analysis. Richard Francis can point to the pulling power of news and comment in the early morning and at 1 o'clock. David Hatch can argue that modified versions of the present programmes, speeded with popular music, would wean some less committed listeners from Jimmy Young and LBC and the rest till *The World at One* (advanced to 12.30) took the strain. I suspect that Monica Sims might fight for the present mixed programme format (albeit sharpened one way or another) on the sensible grounds that there is a deserving audience which wants a channel with widely varied programmes of quality. Whether or not that is the Sims philosophy it certainly comes closest to those "Reithian principles".

The battle for the ratings is concentrated on the morning period for the simple reason that even prestigious night-time programmes like *Kaleidoscope* and *The World Tonight* have been forced to accept the reality of audiences hovering around 300,000; consequently the changes proposed in the Hatch plan for the evening are such as are unlikely to disturb their devotees. But a channel like Radio 4 derives its character from its whole rather than from its parts, and it would be wrong to assume that the uncommon quest for quality which has been forced to accept the reality of audiences hovering around 300,000; consequently the changes proposed in the Hatch plan for the evening are such as are unlikely to disturb their devotees. 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## Cold comfort

## John Weightman on the 300 year progress towards universal literacy in France



## BOOKS

## Land army

The Earth: Past, Present and Future. By Michael Bradshaw. Hodder and Stoughton Educational £3.95. 0 340 239484.

Earth and Man. By B J Knapp. George Allen & Unwin £4.95. 0 04 551053 2.

Landforms, an Introduction to Geomorphology. By Ian Galbraith and Patrick Wiegand. Oxford University Press £2.95. 0 19 913271 2.

Study the Earth Series. By Michael Atherton and Roger Robinson. Water at Work. 0 340 23945 X. Air and Earth. 23946 E. Rocks and Earth History. 24187 X. Useful Materials from the Earth. 241888. Hodder & Stoughton £2.45 each.

Weathering and Erosion. By Stephen T Trudgill. Butterworth £4.95. 0 408 10835 2.

The Earth: Past, Present and Future sets its sights on 16-plus geology students, or those taking the subject as an additional sixth form course. *Earth and Man* and *Landforms* are both aimed at physical geography courses, whereas the series *Study the Earth* sensibly keeps its options open, offering four books that can fit variously into geography, geology, environmental studies, and, I hope, science courses too.

Bradshaw's *The Earth* is a revision of its successful predecessor *A New Geology*. Those familiar with the earlier text will find a major re-ordering of topics, but many old diagrams re-appear albeit clothed in a rather better typeface. Part I of the book opens with an incredibly dense five-page resume of the subject of geology and some major facts about the Earth and its surface features. The reader is told that a large number of observations about the Earth can be fitted into patterns, but no attempt is made to explore these via pupil activities - an omission that characterizes the rest of the book, and is in stark contrast to the teaching approach of the *Study the Earth* series and *Landforms*. Many of the diagrams are black and white. The outdated terms *Stal* and *Sima* are still used; what's wrong with plain straightforward continental and oceanic crust? Part II deals with surfaces processes, in-

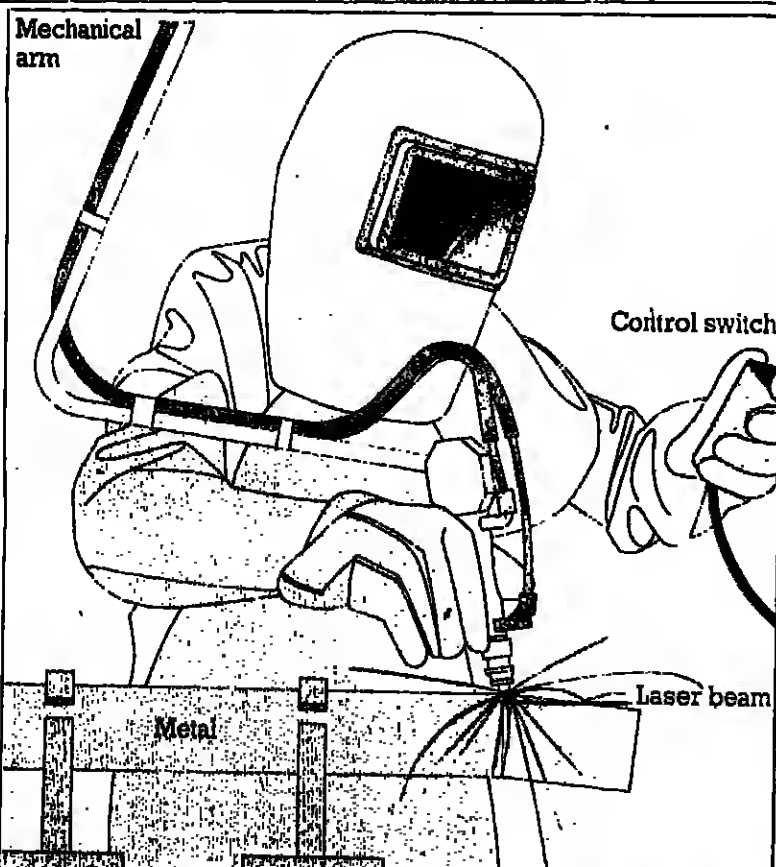
cluding volcanism and earthquakes. Part III, which is by far the longest, is concerned with interpreting the past, starting with small scale features (rocks, minerals and fossils) and ending with evidence from other worlds.

*Earth and Man*, *Landforms* and *Study the Earth* are refreshingly poles apart from the rather staid academic oriented presentation of *Earth: Past, Present and Future*. Not only do they use full colour illustrations (*Landforms* is entirely in full colour), but the styles, reading levels and page layouts all combine in each case to make the subject matter interesting and relevant to pupils' everyday experience. Of course, such colour publications are relatively more expensive than line drawings and half tone photos, but the likelihood is that whereas the high flyers will get through *The Earth* to good effect, the less able will find it daunting, but would be stimulated by the approach of the other books.

*Earth and Man* covers the whole gamut of physical geography. Its 18 chapters are divided into 4 parts, treating in turn the Origin of Land and Sea, Atmosphere and Oceans, Soils, Vegetation and Man, and finally Shaping the Land. A four-page introductory section sets the tone for the approach adopted in the book; its first sentence reads "Did you know that each year more people die from drinking water than alcohol?" Relevant issues about man and his environment recur throughout the book. Within the text, some material is presented in "boxes" which either present individual topics, or useful summaries of several pages. The only parts of the book that I found a little depressing, but I admit regretfully necessary, were the groups of exam-style questions at the end of each chapter.

*Landforms* is precisely what its sub-title indicates it to be; the book covers rocks, earth movements, weathering and slopes, rivers, ice, coasts and deserts. The text contains questions for pupils to consider, and each chapter ends with review questions. Like *Earth and Man*, the geological introduction is basically sound, but much briefer.

The teaching approach used in the *Study the Earth* series betters all these books. Like most modern sci-



A laser "gun" being used to cut metal - from *The Electronic Revolution: Lasers* by Robin McKie (Franklin Watts £4.25) which moves, with clear colourful diagrams and pictures, from supermarket scanners to, of course, eye surgery.

ence texts, all four books encourage pupils to actively explore, via a series of "activity boxes", Earth materials and processes. The three texts on *Rocks and Earth History*, *Air and Earth and Water at Work* cover similar ground to *Earth and Man*, and more besides.

*Useful Materials from the Earth* could fit into geology, geography and conventional science courses. It summarizes what the Earth's resources are, and then deals in turn with water, trees, energy, rocks (limestone, aggregates), minerals and metals. The second half of the book is devoted to six special studies, such as "Farmers and Earth's resources", "Rocks for buildings", and "Seas ancient and modern" (ie salt).

The order in which the books are issued at the beginning of this review is, in presentation terms, a spectrum. At one end is *The Earth*, tailor made for one year sixth cramming courses in O level geology, and at the other the *Study the Earth*

series, in which the pupil is encouraged to actively explore the nature of familiar processes and materials. Paradoxically, the end-members of the spectrum originate from the same publishing house.

Whereas the level of *Weathering and Erosion* is clearly odd man out, it is supportive to the others, for it provides an introduction to project work and a data source in the fields of weathering and erosion. I concur with this statement from the book's preface which implicitly suggests that it is a must for teachers looking for "simple, effective practical methods" of demonstrating the processes and effects of weathering and erosion which are cheap and viable. Let us hope that teachers who use this book will show it to their colleagues in science departments in order to help convince them that there should be more overlap in the teaching of what is regarded as conventional school science and geology and physical geography.

R C Wilson

## Changing gear

New Technology and Industrial Change. By I Benson and J Lloyd. Kogan Page £11.95. 0 85038 284 X. £4.95. 608 X.

The scientific-technical revolution, with an impact on every aspect of our lives, still seems only partially grasped by the public at large.

The authors of this book believe that the issues, especially a political terms, should be faced, and solutions sought, before it is too late for constructive action.

Changes in the pattern of employment, in the structure of the economy and the role of the state are among paramount factors. In a wide-ranging survey of such matters, this book does slow some concepts about our provision of technical education. It suggests that, by comparison with, say, France, Germany, Japan or America, there is still some way to go in this country before parity of opportunity is achieved.

There is a guarded warning that the qualifications of the "Technical and Business Education Councils" (TBCs) should be "Technician", and the two have now combined) have still to gain acceptance from employers. The work of the industrial training boards is touched on, but there is little attention to the training provision for unemployed school-leavers.

But in this overview of changing production processes labour-management relations, transnational companies and social contracts, it is understandable that relatively little space is given to education. Or is it? It is arguable that education holds the key. An overhaul of the school system, associated with the provision of greater (and more varied) resources for further education could mean a greater understanding of technology and smoother acceptance of the inevitable changes to come.

F W Kellaway

## All clear

The Scientific Revolution. By P H Harman. Methuen £1.50. 0 416 350402.

There is a certain way of writing for the young which is also the best way of writing for adults. When academics write for adults they often write for each other. So writing to be clear and not too bothered by footnotes and by the need to ward off captious rivals is an excellent discipline for them. The latest Pamphlet is a model of this position for intelligent minds at ease, unaffected by the need to cover everything and display the supporting apparatus of scholarship. It is also a standing rebuke to those party little A level crabs which cannot and confine the mind so effectively and which ought to be passported to a resounding F.

Dr Harman neatly encapsulates various phases of scientific change and of incubations to the intellectual climate, from the time of the ancient Greeks to the triumph of mechanism, philosophically in the case of Descartes, scientifically with Newton. He gives an eminently fair exposition of way religious doctrines both locked and released scientific methodology. Not all of these doctrines were Christian, of course, and the page three and positive aspects of the Hermetic traditions are helpfully brought out. There we have a balanced account in the more familiar relationship, again negative and positive, between Baconian empiricism and the various kinds of Puritanism. We end with man's pride humbled and his optimism relatively untrammelled. Every school library should have this little booklet.

David Martin

Flat on his face, clasped hands protecting the back of his head, Dr John Green, Head of Atmospheric Physics at Imperial College, was visibly quaking. "Look out," he shouted, "there's no saying that will happen when this lad throws." This lad, tiny, nine-ish and puce with laughter, fell about. It was, after all, Phun Physics.

When they recovered their sangfroid, these two environmental scientists explained that they were presently engaged in rigging an apparatus which would allow a tree, unattended and undisturbed, to record its own movements on a piece of paper. So far that week the Phun Physics group (9 to 13-year-olds), had produced a computer program which, given the angle of inclination and the leaf-to-twig-to-branch ratio, would simulate the growth and leaf pattern of a tree; they had set mammal traps and subsequently calculated the speed, acceleration and motivation of the released field mice and bank voles; observed the rodents' preference for the edge of the tree canopy and found

that, apart from the area immediately outside the tree, the worst place to take shelter in a storm is immediately against the trunk.

The best place is at the edge of the canopy - you have the thickest cover there and all the leaves are sloped to receive the maximum sunlight. That's why both rain and insects fall off," a kladly 10-year-old explained.

"Phun Physics" "Art is a Way of Finding Out" and "In Parallel with Hypotenuse" were all courses at an Explorers summer camp in Ipswich, organized by the National Association for Gifted Children. Art and physics were for the younger ones, Hypotenuse - for readers of Judith Colman's maths magazine - was for the 14 to 17-year-olds. The morning sessions were self-contained; in the afternoon each group offered optional activities and the whole thing became a cheerful free-for-all with hot air balloons, model-making and jelly!

"I had intended that the jelly guns should be a serious, scientifically measurable experiment," said John Green. "But everyone wanted to play,

so it ended up as a gigantic problem-solving exercise. There were jelly slings, jelly catapults, jelly cushions . . . It was a great success."

"The cook, who makes the jellies to a standard consistency, thinks we're all crazy," a houseparent told me. "But it's lovely to see the older ones letting their hair down and allowing themselves to play." Swimming and yoga, silly competitions and team games where players are identified by their painted noses, all help to break down barriers.

"The maths course is really stimulating," one of the few girls on the Hypotenuse course told me cheerfully. "We've had Dr South on specific and general relativity and Prof Francis on partial differential equations. It's Catastrophe Theory! If you want to sit in this afternoon, because there's such a wide range of - well, not age or ability so much as experience - the lecturers tend to start from first principles and hope to take us all with them to the end."

"The maths is great but the social life is even better," she said and went

off to finalize the disco arrangements.

The NAGC has been running residential summer courses for years now - to provide stimulus, enrichment and social life for the brightest children. Fifteen years ago, when I first saw them in action, they were deliberately low-key affairs and barely respectable in an educational atmosphere of fierce equality and enforced mediocrity. Then, parental suggestions of acceleration or special enrichment programmes were met with pursed-lipped disapproval from the schools and a dispiriting number of children were taken out of the state sector by desperate parents.

At Ipswich, the children were equally divided between state and private schools and the course tutors, helpers and houseparents seemed either to be L.E.A. advisers or to have sent by them.

One houseparent had been sent on the course by her adviser . . . because I'm working with children with special needs and it was felt that I should have a look at the other end of the scale. I've been surprised at how

many similarities there are. Both groups will denigrate their own efforts as a way of asking for positive feedback.

"There are different attitudes for these children, though the same isolation can exist. I think that one or two feel they have been labelled and may not be up to it. I'd love to see how my severely-deprived kids would respond to this environment. It has been marvellous to see the increase in enjoyment and decrease in apprehension as the week has gone by."

Roger Kiddie, a primary teacher from Gravesend in Kent and the ecological half of the Phun Physics team, was equally impressed with the week. "It's a busman's holiday for me - a pleasure to work with children who are so motivated. I brought my mammal traps, bird-ringing equipment, that sort of thing to work alongside John. Basically we were looking at a shape, the tree, and relating that shape, physically and mathematically, to the animals occupying the environment. Well . . . that's how it started. But they've got such lively minds we left off after probability and all sorts of things . . ."

In art, too, all sorts of things happened. Under the stylish leadership of Ann Fairman, primary teacher, and Alec Pearson, head of art at Skipton School, the group made cheerful 3D stick models, giant geodesic domes in art straw, landscape murals and abstracts on a grand scale, mobiles and tiny slide pictures out of burnt, painted, superimposed pieces of coloured film, all ready for an audio-visual presentation on the last evening.

Art, too, was interdisciplinary. The lunch-hour was punctuated by a quick trip to the computer to watch the Mondrian called up by one of the older explorers. "Show us the program - put it on a magenta base - bleah - go back to red and white," they chanted.

"They have the same enthusiasm and concentration, whatever they are doing," said a houseparent. "I went down to the art room yesterday to have a look at the slide-making. The atmosphere was electric."

Wandering round the classrooms, the subject-sex-bias was still evident, but not quite as marked as a decade ago. I thought. Girls positively dominated the art course, were slightly outnumbered in physics and still had a reckonable presence, perhaps 25 per cent, in maths. What they lacked in numbers they certainly made up for in enthusiasm: "Lovely, it's like play-school all over again," said one young lady as the lecturer demonstrated Catastrophe Theory with the aid of elastic rope and a saw blade in compression.

How did an Explorers course compare with school? "You probably wouldn't learn as much," a thoughtful 11-year-old explained as she showed me the grounds, "or maybe you wouldn't realize you were learning so much. But it's definitely more fun when the subjects are integrated." Watching the tutorial double-acts in progress I could only agree.

## The gift of learning

Sixty children, 20 sympathetic and enthusiastic adults in a stately home/school - it could hardly fail.

Susan Thomas went to see for herself at the Explorers summer camp for gifted children.



menzies simple, quite obvious as soon as someone else has thought of it. On a four-by-four square board, two players each manoeuvre a three-by-two L shape and a single square piece, trying to render the other player incapable of moving. There are several definite "solutions", but reaching one of them is quite difficult. "Can be learnt in seconds and played for hours", in fact; and unlike noughts-and-crosses, for instance, there are no forced outcomes - in theory two good players could play for ever. Surely maths teachers could find some basic principles here?

Dr de Bono is not just annoyingly clever; not just rich and successful. He is a man with a mission: to convince us all of our own potential. One theme that runs through all the material accompanying these games is the importance of not underestimating children. He insists that both these games, under the right circumstances, can be played by three-year-olds; and that young children may have the advantage of adults. For such important wisdom one can almost forgive him his rightness.

## Thinking along new L-lines

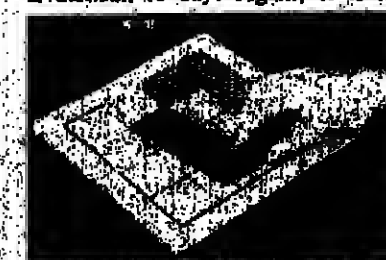
by Nick Thomas

like Snap or Happy Families - but with the major difference that players are generally allowed, within parameters, to define their own sets. For example, one may have to connect the cards one is dealt, or to guess someone else's connection. What do a wheelbarrow, a car, and a bucket have in common? They all carry things; and there are other possible answers, all "correct".

These games stimulate mental muscles which can atrophy under more formal and closed-ended regimes. A few of them seem awkward, but most impress with their "obviousness" - which is to say, their authenticity. Included with the cards are two booklets: one describing the games, the other discussing the mental processes involved; the different forms of re-making called for by different games. Clearly, the cards can also be used to work with spelling, story-making and so on; de-

Bono has found some neat methods. Many of the games involve an adult facilitator, and the potential for use in classrooms is tremendous. A single kit can be used by a large group (there are 100 different cards); and in fact making one's own copies, or if that is against copyright one's own version, would take very little effort.

The L-Game seems as though it must be educational, but quite how is difficult to say. Again, it is im-



Tales From Allotment Lane School. By Margaret Joy. Faber £4.50. 571 11992 1.

Kamla and Kate. By Jamila Gavin. Methuen £3.95. 416 22780 5.

The Old Man Who Sneezed. Read-Aloud Stories by Dorothy Edwards. Methuen £4.95. 416 26120 5.

Better Skelter. By Pamela Oldfield. Blackie £5.50. 216 91408 5.

Mr Wizz. By Allen Suddler. Abelard £5.25. 200 72804 0.

Crazy Animal Stories. By Anne-Marie Dalmas. Hodder and Stoughton £3.95. 340 32626 3.

Three of the above books are specifically recommended as "read-aloud" books. *Tales From Allotment Lane School* is a charming collection for the five and sixes. With a teacher like Miss Mee as the star attraction, what child wouldn't long to attend her school? She is the Perfect Teacher. She never gets ruffled, never panics, always says, and does the right things with cheerful friendliness. But in the episode *A Class Trip* one forgets about Miss Mee and recalls with shame and frustration what the poor, inexperienced teacher has to put up with when she

(he) ventures outside the school precincts with a whole class. *Mary's Busy Morning* reminds us of one of the most endearing aspects of children's behaviour: the shy but obvious delight of two youngsters at being the Chosen Ones to deliver top priority messages to other classes, and their comradely jogging of each other's memories in moments of crisis. *Hunt The Caterpillar* tells about the development and metamorphosis of that engaging insect, and this, together with the miscellany of ideas in *Halfpenny*, should be of great help to most teachers. *Kamla and Kate* does not strike one as spectacularly appropriate for reading aloud but it is a brave start at depicting and promoting friendship between different races. The Grand Finale of this little volume is about a Diwali Party - the celebration of the Hindu Festival of Light - which is described in splendid and vivid detail.

The late and much-missed Dorothy Edwards provides an excellent gaggle of very short read-alouds in *The Old Man Who Sneezed*. There are two light-hearted cautionary pieces among them, all told with her customary charm and skill. One is a ever popular "invisible" game. The other for which he fraudulently collected extra helpings. His mother, cottoned on and pays him back in his own coin - invisible portions of . . .

The other teaches us to put our things away properly so they don't get lost or damaged. But the best is about a diminutive canine Canute whose devotion to his master enables him to tell the waves where to get off - a piece of shrewd insight into the doggy mind. Finally there's one which commends respect for one's elders - even when they are only dolls.

Pamela Oldfield's own story about a six-year-old boy's crush on a "yellow-haired" maiden of 10 makes a splendid contribution to her varied collection. Contributors include Ted Hughes, Charles Causley and James Reeves. It's a splendid idea to introduce each piece with a mini biography of the author; children get a great thrill out of meeting a live writer and this is probably the next best thing.

As for the other contributions: *How The Poin Bear Became* is as beautifully poetic a tale as you would expect from Ted Hughes. The two stories by Paul Biegel - about magic shows and a paper palace - strike me as pedestrian and unoriginal - a certainly not vintage Biogel. Alf Prýsén's *The Mice and the Xmas Tree* is an unsavoury mishmash of anthropomorphicized mice, a Christmas tree, a sophisticated Granny Mouse and a sprit-of-Christmas generosity cat. The harmonious consistency by those two masters of the genre - Potter

and Utloy - seems completely lacking here.

Full marks to Allen Suddler for a superb story about a really human magician, for a change - not a real magician, and for a real human six-year-old, whose mind Mr Suddler reads with a rare perspicacity. Mr Wizz's tentative "explanations" of his prescientifications show a nice balance between a sympathetic reluctance to exploit the child's wide-eyed innocence and a keen desire on behalf of both of them to keep the illusion alive. To the adult, who appreciates both viewpoints, the outcome is totally entrancing.

There's a natty fluency about the telling of *Crazy Animal Stories* and the bold, clear print and multi-coloured half and full-page illustrations make it an attractive book to handle. One assumes that the French author, trained in Chinese and philosophy, must have freely adapted many of them from Chinese folk-lore and given them a good-naturedly zany twist. Not every child will take to their long-drawn-out ingenuity. *The Trip to the Moon*, for example, in which a wily mouse foils a worldly-wise baboon takes too many twists and turns before reaching an abruptly unsatisfactory conclusion. *The Yak's Shampoo*, on the other hand, has just the right, longish and simplicity and amused my eight-year-old niece immensely.

Stephen Corrin



## RESOURCES

## Children on TV

In 200 schools this autumn children will spend Monday morning lessons discussing how a young lad cleaned the teeth of a crocodile. Or they may talk of a little girl being seen in two by a magician or a small English schoolboy's initiation into a Red Indian tribe by the famous Iron Eyes Cody.

Their discussions will be recorded and used to improve the quality of television programmes. For Central Television have asked Oxford Polytechnic's TV Research Unit to evaluate their children's programmes, starting with *The Saturday Show*.

The Television Research Unit will seek the views of 6,000 children, their teachers and parents and the content of *The Saturday Show* will be the basis for creative writing and other class work during the week.

"As a programme maker and a former teacher I want to know as much as possible about my audience, who they are and what they like," says the producer, Glyn Edwards. "I want feedback from them which can be incorporated into programme-making policy - a dialogue between audience and programme makers."

The unit will hand over weekly reports on the live show during the 30-week series. This gives plenty of time for their recommendations to be incorporated. "The bits the kids like can be improved and the unpopular items revamped or dropped... But we won't give in totally to the audience - they would probably all want video nasties!"



Swapping places

Central normally use commercial research agencies, but they are impressed by the fact that Oxford Polytechnic can conduct the study as part of the school curriculum. According to Central Research Manager Kenda Harris "they are different because they are actually doing it within schools."

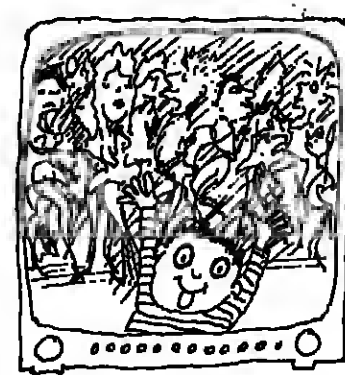
So it's the children themselves who say whether they were impressed by a youngster snookering Steve Davies or if they enjoyed watching a headmaster swap places for a day with one of his pupils, past spots on *The Saturday Show*.

Leader of the unit and senior lecturer in the Department of Educational Development is the Rev Brian Brown, dubbed the Pop Parson in the 60s because he was chaplain to The Swinging Blue Jeans, the Merseybeats, Freddie and the Dreamers and other pop groups, and was an honorary member of Liverpool's Cavern, early home of the Beatles. He believes the existence of the TV Research Unit is a denial of the validity of the recent DES report: "Popular TV and Schoolchildren".

"The report perpetuated the myth that TV is an enemy of education and TV companies are abusing and using children. Contrary to the received wisdom, makers are anxious to improve the quality of their programmes. The point isn't particularly what we say about them, but that we exist."

The unit was set up originally with money from the Joseph Rank Benevolent Trust for a project studying Sunday school programmes. Now it has more than £50,000 worth of contracts in the pipeline from programme makers attempting to improve the standard of their broadcasts.

Programme makers, according to Brian Brown, are falling over themselves to get it right. Since the unit was set up a year ago the researchers have been inundated with work and are having to take on more staff. "We give



## Jane Last on means of assessing young people's reactions to television

producers direct access to their audience. We feed actual live comment on their programmes back to them to take seriously week after week - not graphs and statistics."

"Our research is involved with qualitative evaluation of content and examination of the programme makers' assumptions about their audience. This is where our research style is distinctive from others. We are seeking to answer the questions producers want to answer, but don't have time."

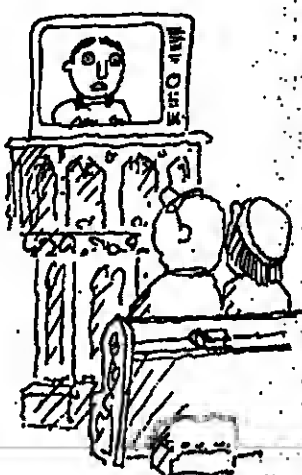
The unit has also been asked to investigate children and home videos. This work was commissioned in June before the announcement of Graham Bright's Private Members Bill to outlaw video nasties which will soon be before the House of Commons. Twenty-two per cent of children have access to videos, mostly in urban working-class homes, Brian Brown will be looking at what kids watch and who

they watch with. He will investigate what pays for the videos, the availability of material and whether kids go to video parties. The unit will discuss whether programmes declared unsuitable for young children are actually seen by them at a time of public debate on the influence of pornographic and violent films on youngsters.

"Extensive laboratory and field experiments into the persuasive potential of propaganda films has failed to demonstrate that even the most carefully prepared ideological message had any measurable effect upon opinion firmly held. Parents, friends, and the leader of the youth club or Sunday school are far more influential in opinion formers than the messages of television," Brian Brown believes. "Anxiety about the influence of TV on the behaviour and beliefs of children may be misplaced."

"TV was not the cause of the sexual and ethical revolution which accompanied the age of affluence. It simply conveniently played a part in making the new ideas more readily available, but it was not responsible for creating the Beatles, Mary Quant, the pill, the trial of Lady Chatterley and the gay industry."

\* Popular TV and School Children Commissioned by HM Inspector



Video in church

## MEDIA

## Fighting the system

## VIDEO

Seven 26-minute programmes VHS or Betamax £45 plus VAT from Yorkshire Television Ltd, The Television Centre, Leeds LS3 1JS (0532-438283)

*That's the Way*, one of YTV's "non-theatrical programmes" now available on film or videotape, aims to show how to cope with "the system" - officialdom, bureaucracy or whatever other name you like to give to "them" as opposed to "us".

The seven programmes deal with all kinds of problems we may come up against trying to meet fundamental needs like housing, health, and education, with budgeting and consumerism, and how to cope if we come up against the law.

YTV's aim is "making information entertaining", and the byword here seems to be variety. We see the same three presenters in many different guises within the space of

each programme; out in the field charting the unsung struggles of individuals against bureaucracy; epic horrors, some of them, like the story of the old age pensioner arrested for stealing a turkey, who refused to plead guilty, decided to conduct his own defence in court and though not convicted, was never able to clear his name. But there are success stories: the homeless who do get a council house and the vendor who does get redress against a grasping estate agent.

Other times the presenters are back at base, perched on studio stools, contriving to look affluent without being official, and dispensing firm but friendly advice.

Most often, though, they're not stool sitters but stool pigeons, role-

playing bureaucracy's butts in disastrous scenarios illustrating just what not to do. Characters turn up in all kinds of trouble: losing their temper with officials, who are then unable to explain what benefits they can claim; being bullied and bluffed by the GP who doesn't explain medical terminology, and two no-win penance whether you're adult or child, being cheeky to a police woman and atrophy with the headmaster.

But all is never lost. Just when things look irretrievable, the protagonist's alter ego pops up on screen in a little round inset, an *esprit d'escalier* for once appearing before it's too late, and speaking with the voice of reason: "Do you really know what he means? Go on - ask!" "Are you sure you know

what you're doing?" "Why not suggest a compromise?" And the situation is saved. If only there were little round insets in life!

Elizabeth Mickery and Brian Truman role-play officialdom with just the right blend of rule-worship and concerned inaction, and Noreen Kershaw falls sweetly into ignorant, glibly ordinariness, though for anyone who saw her recently at the Mermaid playing Trafford Tani, the female wrestler, her vulnerability will be touched with irony. Often down but never out, Tani wrestles her way into control over her life. This face is not the face to be done down by bureaucracy for long.

The mix of presentation styles is a good one, and the programmes succeed in being both informative and

entertaining. They don't, of course, have all the answers, but they do tell you how to find out, where to go for more information, who to turn to, who to complain to, in a manner of different predicaments.

The Citizens' Advice Bureau is heavily plugged, quite rightly, as first step, and the book of the series, *That's the Way to Cope*, written by David Browne, is another obvious starting point.

Most of the problems discussed are problems of adult life, as for those about to embark on it the programmes could be useful. Adult life hits suddenly and hard, surprising on a grant or on the dole could be just around the corner; you could buy a faulty radio, find yourself in hospital or get arrested tomorrow. Knowing how the system works before you're caught up in it must be an advantage.

Jessica Savage

## Cultural journey

## VIDEO

Two-Way Ticket Six 26-minute programmes VHS or Betamax £45 plus VAT from Yorkshire Television Ltd.

UNICEF Development Kits: No. 13 The Desert Child (Patinetout of Mauritania); No. 14 The Mountain Child (Oscar of Peru); No. 15 The Rainforest Child (Pauline of Malaysia), £8.45 each from the UK Committee for UNICEF, 33 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3NE (01-405-5592).

In a very valuable tie-up arrangement, traveller and writer Sarah Hobson has presented her explorations

of children's life in different parts of the world in more than one format. There is a series of six programmes made for Yorkshire Television; three of these have also been turned into UNICEF information packs; and there is also a book available from Macdonalds, with the same title.

The six areas covered differ in culture, climate and terrain. They are the Peruvian mountains; the Malaysian jungle; the Hebrides; Arctic Norway; Bangladesh; and the Mauritanian desert. In each case, a child from the region concerned is brought to the English studios to talk about their life, show us every-day objects, sing or dance.

This may sound bideously embarrassing; but Sarah Hobson's total lack of cooedecision, her genuine contact and sympathy with the children and their cultures, makes each visit an actual meeting point. And she asks for their reactions to our culture as well.

This interview occupies the second half of each programme. The first half combines economy with ingenuity and effectiveness in its combination of still and motion pictures and sound recordings from the archives - presenting the image of each place in our culture's eyes as well as its actuality.

Many simple but skilful aids to comprehension are used in the description of the different regions' lifestyle and occupations.

Sarah Hobson is also responsible for the UNICEF kits. The core of each is a set of colour slides drawn

from the Yorkshire Television programmes and accompanied by comments drawn directly from interviews with the child who lives in the area (only Peru, Mauritania and Malaysia are covered). The rest of each kit consists of half of background notes on the place, the people, and UNICEF's activities there, and half of activity sheets. Especially useful is a section on "Misconceptions", helping children to look at ideas on other cultures are conditioned and distorted.

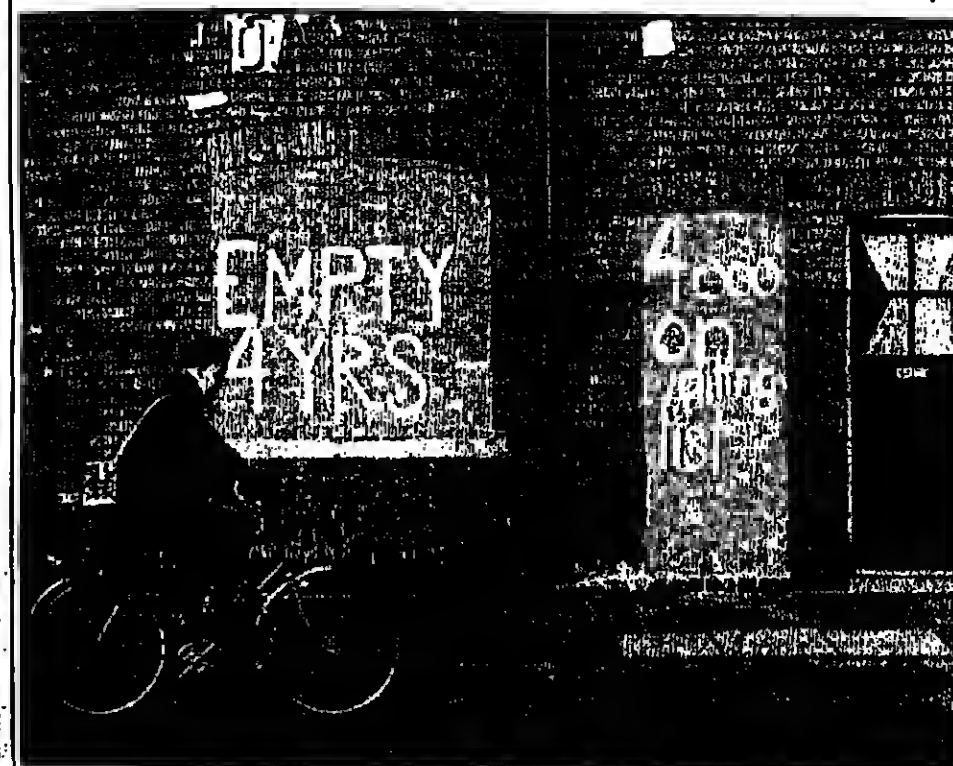
Either the television series or the UNICEF kits can stand completely on their own as useful and attractive aids to learning about the world. But the combination of the two may be found especially useful - with the kit taking pupils further into the infrastructure of a society.

Nick Thomas

## END PAGE

## What's the point?

Education for life means more than education for work; Gabriel Chanan argues schools should be teaching the community skills people need to improve their lot.



Education has often been the route by which bright individuals escape from depressed environments. Those who cannot escape are assumed to be able to adapt to an unchangeable environment. But community studies in school could lay the basis for the skills required to diagnose and change that environment directly, both by organising amongst one's neighbours and by negotiating with local authorities and other holders of power and resources.

I am not suggesting that these goals can be aimed at by children. But they form an area of adult need and opportunity which should be a reference-point for the aims of schooling, like employment and other recognised areas of lifelong activity.

The commanding heights of the practical curriculum have been seized by the MSC. Schools are now obliged to view MSC schemes as an immediate destination for a large proportion of leavers. Success on an MSC scheme therefore becomes the nearest outside-school goal for these pupils, as success in higher education is for others.

But lasting practical goals in education need to be derived from an analysis of the whole of adult life. MSC schemes may be a realistic introduction to conventional industry work, for those who get employment. But it can only temporarily delay the realization, applicable to all though most acute for the unemployed, that the majority of life's problems do not occur in the form of clear-cut demands but in the form of ill-understood needs and ill-seen opportunities.

The new personal effectiveness element in MSC schemes (equivalent to life skills in the Youth Opportunities Programme) goes a little way towards addressing this fact - but only a little. Schools are in a better position, with their wider range of types of knowledge, to confront it fully. In doing so, they could "leapfrog" the MSC curriculum and demonstrate a more penetrating kind of practicality, oriented to the world which young people will face after MSC training.

Community studies, or more accurately, community development studies is not a concept pulled out of the air: it comes from 15 years' experimentation. There is nothing secret about the experiments and yet they are not well known. Four initiatives began in 1968 and 1969: the national Community Development Project (CDP); the Urban Aid programme; the Educational Priority Areas (EPAs); and the Young Volunteer Force Foundation (YVFF).

The CDP's brief was to help people, in 12 disadvantaged districts, to participate more actively in local democracy and so influence the way that local authority services were delivered. The local bases produced a great many reports, and arguably moved government perceptions of inner-city decay away from the supposed fecklessness of low-income groups towards structural explanations like the closure of local industries. Some of the reports became increasingly critical of government, and the project was gradually cut adrift and abandoned by its Home Office sponsors.

The Urban Aid programme now handled by the Department of Environment was originally conceived as mopping up obstinate patches of poverty in an affluent society. It is a flexible resource allocating parcels of money by assessing applications from local authorities who have identified special needs. Urban Aid has become increasingly important as the recession has deepened, though, like all these experiments, it is still very small compared with the size of the problems it is trying to tackle.

The EPA had a marked, though not uncriticised, influence on educational practice, encouraging schools in disadvantaged areas to accommodate more of the real life of their pupils. And YVFF, originally designed to turn the talents of disaffected young people to helping their neighbours, was increasingly drawn into confronting the common problems of the young people and their neighbours: in 1978 this was recognised by the change of name to Community Projects Foundation.

The young adult who cannot get a job does not find himself or herself in a situation of leisure, but in a psychological vacuum. For a woman there may be a strong pressure to take premature refuge in the normality of being a housewife and mother. For a man there may be the difficulty of accepting a female role if his wife or partner gets a job and he doesn't. For either, being unemployed is more likely to be felt as a personal problem, whether of inadequacy or bad luck, than as conferring some kind of new identity in common with others. The ability to take advantage of leisure facilities is likely to be limited by lack of information, public transport or money. Housing conditions and local amenities will vitally affect quality of life. Welfare benefits grants and services may present a jungle

The feeling that nothing can be done about the state of the world, even the local world, is common enough even amongst the employed and the established. How much more potent and isolated must the young unemployed feel? Yet the experience of community development is that most local situations contain unrealised possibilities for constructive action.

Many of the problems faced by individuals are probably shared by others in the locality and could form the basis of a common-interest group where information can be exchanged, friendships can be built up and joint action can be considered. Problems are less overwhelming when looked at from the point of view of a group pooling its ideas and skills. Even quite small groups usually turn out to have, between them, a surprisingly wide range of knowledge and skills.

Local public groups can be created by quite small numbers of people and obtain far reaching benefits for a neighbourhood. If they gain at least the passive support of a fairly wide section of the local population. Elected councils are supposed to be responsive to ordinary people's needs and wishes, and can eventually be influenced by sustained argument.

Those who cannot earn more can spend less by organising mutual help such as working on each other's houses, bulk buying of food, or sharing information about benefits. There may be dormant wealth in your locality in the form of empty buildings or amenities that are unused for parts of the week or year, which could be made available for social or workshop activities.

Local economies sometimes have gaps which can be filled by new small business activity, which you can get help in starting. Central government has various sums set aside which can be allocated to areas in need if local authorities can meet the necessary criteria, but authorities may not take this action unless pressed to do so.

Concepts like these are just as intellectually demanding as those in academic syllabuses, and it may therefore be difficult to imagine that they could be mastered by pupils of low ability. But our notion of ability has been so narrowed by its association with academic achievement that we may surely hope to find unsuspected abilities drawn out by the practical orientation of these new goals.

Most of the achievements of local groups have never been documented. But there is a gradually increasing literature on the subject. Between 1977 and 1982, for example, community groups involving some 200 adults in Bedworth Heath, Warwickshire, in an ill-provided and initially demoralised neighbourhood of 8,000, achieved:

- a new heating system on a council estate;
- an advice service;
- several community festivals;
- a free community newspaper;
- a new community centre;
- 15 jobs under the Community Programme;
- better dialogue with the local authority;
- confidence in their own power to organise and

The skills that can improve life in this way are valuable alongside those which enable people to improve their lives by earning a wage. But they are not alternatives. If anything, the community skills are more complex. Certainly they involve more intellectual stretching than most paid labour does. Acquiring them would not impede people's ability to get conventional jobs - quite the contrary. No doubt, just like academic goals, community development studies would involve lower-level concepts and activities which need to be mastered at an earlier stage. Some will come down to the same basic skills which teachers have always sought to impart. Others will point to major neglected areas, such as understanding the powers and decision-making processes of local authorities.

A great deal of what we call inability to learn is surely just inability to see the point of learning. Perhaps this reflects teachers' lack of conviction that what they are imparting has a practical use. A clearer view of how communities can fight for their own development would help to change.

Gabriel Chanan is Deputy Director at CPF, 60 Highbury Grove, London, N5 2AG.

















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Education Department

### EDUCATIONAL

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